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THE

# Distinguishing Characters

OF

# TRUE BELIEVERS.

IN RELATION TO,

I. God in Christ, as their refuge and portion.
II. Their disposition and practice as citizens of Zion.
III. Their respect to, and reverence of God's name.
IV. Their meek and peaceable temper.
V. Their forgiving of injuries.
VI. Their loving their enemies.
VII. Their behaviour as Zion's mourners.
VIII. Their friendship to Christ, and the evidence thereof.
IX. Their Christian work and journey.
X. The happy effect of Christ's good-will to them.
XI. Their entering into rest in Christ.

In several practical Discourses, largely handled, and excellently calculated to promote the comfort and direction of Christians, and the advantage of human Society.

To which is prefixed,

A SOLILOQUY on the ART of MAN-FISHING.

Now first published from the Manuscripts of

The late Reverend and Learned

MR THOMAS BOSTON,

Minister of the Gospel at ETTRICK.

Author of the Fourfold State, &c. &c.

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A

# SOLILOQUY

ON THE

# ART of MAN-FISHING.

Written in 1699.

[*For a Pattern to every Preacher of the Gospel.*]

AH! Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? This day seems to be a day of darkness and gloominess; the glory is departed even to the threshold of the temple. We may call ordinances *Ichabod;* and name the faithful preachers of Scotland no more *Naomi*, but *Marah*, for the Lord deals bitterly with them, in forsaking his ordinances so much as at this day. The Lord hath forsaken them in a great measure, as to success attending their labours. They toil all the night; but little or nothing is caught; few or none can they find to come into the net. So that Jeremiah's exercise may be theirs chap xiii. 17. "If ye will not hear it, my "soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and "mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears."

And thou, O my soul, mayst make this thy exercise, if thou hadst a heart that could mourn either for thyself or others. Though indeed it is no great wonder that God does not countenance with much success the like of me, who (if I may or dare class myself among those that are faithful) am the meanest, the most unactive of



those

them all, not worthy to take his covenant in my mouth, who am a child in piety and the myſtery of godlineſs, though not in years; who am a poor fool, having a weak heart and a ſhallow head; who might rather be learning of others than teaching them; who can but wade about the outer parts of that depth, into which others can enter far; who have ſo little love to Chriſt, and ſo little pure zeal for his glory; can ſay ſo little for the truth, and ſo little againſt error; who am altogether unworthy and inſufficient for theſe things: no wonder, I ſay, God does not countenance me, when others, that are as tall cedars in the Lord's vineyard, do ſo little good, even others that are great men in the church for piety and learning. But yet ſeeing I am called out to preach this everlaſting goſpel, it is my duty to endeavour, and it is my deſire to be (Lord, thou knoweſt) a fiſher of men. But, alas! I may come in with my complaints to my Lord, that I have toiled in ſome meaſure, but caught nothing, for any thing I know, as to the converſion of any one ſoul. I fear I may ſay, I have almoſt ſpent my ſtrength in vain, and my labour for nought, for Iſrael is not gathered. O my ſoul, what may be the cauſe of this, why does my preaching ſo little good? No doubt part of the blame lies on myſelf, and a great part of it too. But who can give help in this caſe but the Lord himſelf? and how can I expect it from him but by prayer, and faith in the promiſes, and by conſulting his word, where I may, by his Spirit ſhining on my heart, (ſhine, O Sun of righteouſneſs), learn how to carry, and what to do, to the end the goſpel preached by me may not be unſuccelsful? Therefore did my heart cry out after Chriſt this day, and my ſoul was moved, when I read that ſweet promiſe of Chriſt Matth iv. 19. *Follow me, and I will make you fiſhers of men*, directed to thoſe that would follow him. O how fain would my ſoul follow him, on other accounts, ſo on this, that I might be honoured to be a fiſher of men! Therefore my ſoul would fain know what ſort of following of Chriſt this is, to which

which this sweet promise is annexed. I would know it, (Lord, thou knowest), that I might do it, and so catch poor souls by the gospel, and that I might know whether I have a right to this promise or not. O let thy light and thy truth shine forth, that they may be guides to me in this matter; and let the meditations of my heart be according to thy mind, and directed by thy unerring Spirit. Grant light and life, O Lord my God!

*Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.*

In these words there are two things to be considered.

1. There is a duty, *Follow me.* Wherein consider, (1.) The object, *me*, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the chief fisher of men, who was sent by the Father to gather in the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who was and is the infinitely-wise God, and so knew the best way to catch men, and can instruct men how to be fishers of others. (2.) The act, *Follow* (Gr. *come after*) *me:* Leave your employment, and come after me. Though no doubt there is a direction here to all the ministers of the gospel, that have left their other employments, and betaken themselves to the preaching of the word, *viz.* that if they would do good to souls, and gain them by their ministry, then they are to imitate Christ, in their carriage and preaching to make him their pattern, to write after his copy, as a fit mean for gaining of souls.

2. There is a promise annexed to the duty. Wherein we may consider. (1.) The benefit promised; that is, to be *made fishers of men;* which I take to be not only an investing of them with authority, and a calling of them to the office, but also a promise of the success they should have, that fishing of men should be their employment, and they should not be employed in vain, but following Christ, they should indeed catch men by the gospel. (2.) The fountain-cause of this,

*I, I will make you;* none other can make you fishers of men but me.

Thou mayest observe, 1. Then, O my soul, *that it is the Lord Jesus Christ that makes men fishers of men.*

Here I shall shew,

I. How Christ makes men fishers of men.

II. Why unconverted men are compared to fish in the water.

III. That ministers are fishers by office.

I. How does Christ make men fishers of men?

In answer to this question, consider spiritual fishing two ways. 1. As to the office and work itself: and, 2. As to the success of it.

*First*, He makes them fishers as to their office, by his call, which is twofold, outward and inward, by setting them apart to the office of the ministry; and it is thy business. O my soul, to know whether thou hast it or not. But of this more afterwards.

*Secondly*, He makes them fishers as to success; that is, he makes them catch men to himself by the power of his Spirit accompanying the word they preach, and the discipline they administer, 1 Cor. i. 18. "The preaching of the cross—unto us which are saved, is the power of God. 1 Thess. i. 5. Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." He it is that brings sinners into the net which ministers spread; and if he be not with them to drive the fish into the net, they may toil all the night and day too, and catch nothing.

1. O my soul, then see that gifts will not do the business. A man may preach as an angel, and yet be useless. If Christ withdraw his presence, all will be to no purpose. If the Master of the house be away, the household will loath their food, though it be dropping down about their tent-doors.

2. Why shouldst thou then on the one hand, as some-

sometimes thou art, be lifted up when thou preachest a good and solid discourse, wherein gifts do appear, and thou gettest the applause of men? Why, thou mayst do all this, and yet be no fisher of men. The fish may see the bait, and play about it as pleasant, but this is not enough to catch them. On the other hand, why shouldst thou be so much discouraged, (as many times is the case), because thy gifts are so small, and thou art but as a child in comparison of others? Why, if Christ will, he can make thee a fisher of men, as well as the most learned rabbi in the church, Psal viii. 2. *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.* Yea, hast thou not observed how God owned a man very weak in gifts, and Mr. J. E. made him more successful than others that were far beyond him in parts? Has not God put this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power might be seen to be of him? Lift up thyself then, O my soul, Christ can make thee a fisher of men, however weak thou art. Follow thou him. My soul desires to follow hard after thee, O God!

3. Be concerned then, in the first place, O my soul, for the presence of God in ordinances, and for his power that will make a change among people, Psal cx. 3. When thy discourse, though never so elaborate, shall be but a a lovely song, O set thyself most for this. When thou studiest, send up ejaculations to thy Lord for it. When thou writest a sermon, or ruminatest on it, then say to God, Lord, this will be altogether weak without thy power accompanying it. O, power and life from God in ordinances is sweet. Seek it for thyself, and seek it for thy hearers. Acknowledge thine own weakness and unsufficiency without it, and to cry incessantly for it, that the Lord may drive the fish into the net, when thou art dreading it out. Have an eye to this power, when thou art preaching; and think not thou to convert men

by the force of reaſon: If thou do, thou wilt be beguiled

4. What an honourable thing is it to be fiſhers of men! How great an honour ſhouldſt thou eſteem it, to be a catcher of ſouls! *We are workers together with God*, ſays the apoſtle. If God has ever ſo honoured thee, O that thou knewеſt it, that thou mightſt bleſs his holy name, that ever made ſuch a poor fool as thee to be a co-worker with him. God has owned thee to do good to thoſe who were before caught. O my ſoul, bleſs thou the Lord. Lord, what am I, or what is my father's houſe, that thou haſt brought me to this?

5. Then ſeeſt thou not here what is the reaſon thou toileſt ſo long, and catcheſt nothing? The power comes not along. Men are like Samuel, who, when God was calling him, thought it had been Eli. So when thou ſpeakeſt many times, they do not diſcern God's voice, but thine; and therefore the word goes out as it comes in.

6. Then, O my ſoul, deſpair not of the converſion of any, be they ever ſo proſligate. For it is the power of the Spirit that drives any perſon into the net; and this cannot be reſiſted. Mockers of religion, yea, blaſphemers may be brought into the net; and many times the wind of God's Spirit in the word lays the tall cedars in ſin down upon the ground, when they that ſeem to be as low ſhrubs in reſpect of them, ſtand faſt upon their root. Publicans and harlots ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven before ſelf-righteous Phariſees.

7. What thinkeſt thou, O my ſoul, of that doctrine that lays aſide this power of the Spirit, and makes moral ſuaſion all that is requiſite to the fiſhing of men? That doctrine is hateful to thee. My ſoul loaths it, as attributing too much to the preacher, and too much to corrupt nature, in taking away its natural impotency to good, and as againſt the work of God's Spirit, contrary to experience; and is to me

a

a sign of the rottenness of the heart that embraces it. Alas! that it should be owned by any among us, where so much of the Spirit's power has been felt.

II But why are unconverted men compared to fish in the water? Among other reasons, they are so,

1 Because as the water is the natural element of fish, so sin is the proper and natural element of an unconverted soul. Take the fish out of the water, it cannot live; and take from a natural man his idols, he is ready to say with Micah, *Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* The young man in the gospel could not be persuaded to seek after treasure in heaven, and lay by the world. It is in sin that the only delight of natural men is; but in holiness they have no more delight than a fish upon the earth, or a sow in a palace. Oh the woful case of a natural man! Bless the Lord, O my soul, that when that was thy element as well as that of others, yet Christ took thee in his net, held thee, and would not let thee go, and put another principle in thee, so that now it is heavy for thee to wade, far more to swim in these waters.

2. The fish in a sunny day are seen to play themselves in the water. So the unregenerate, whatever grief they may seem to have upon their spirits, when a storm arises either without, by outward troubles, or within by conscience gnawing convictions, yet when these are over, and they are in a prosperous state, they play themselves in the way of sin, and take their pleasure in it, not considering what it may cost them at the last. Oh! how does prosperity in the world ruin many a soul! The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. And O how destructive would prosperity have been to thee, O my soul, if God had given it to thee many times when thou would'st have had it! Bless the Lord, that ever he was pleased to cross thee in a sinful course.

3. As the fish greedily look after and snatch at the bait, not minding the hook; even so natural men drink in sin greedily, as the ox drinketh in the water. They look on sin as a sweet morsel; and it is to them sweet in the mouth, though bitter in the belly. They play with it, as the fish with the bait: but, Oh! alas, when they take the serpent in their bosom, they mind not the sting, Prov ix 17, 18 The devil knows well how to dress his hooks; but, alas! men know not by nature how to discern them. Pity then, O my soul, the wicked of the world, whom thou seest greedily satisfying their lusts. Alas! they are poor blinded fools; they see the bait, but not the hook; and therefore it is that they are even seen as it were dancing about the mouth of the pit; therefore rush they on to sin as a horse to the battle, not knowing the hazard O pity the poor drunkard, the swearer, the unclean person, *&c.* that is wallowing in his sin. Bless thou the Lord also, O my soul, that when thou wast playing with the bait, and as little minding the hook as others, God opened thine eyes, and let thee see thy madness and danger, that thou mightst flee from it. And O be now careful that thou snatch at none of the devil's baits, lest he catch thee with his hook: for though thou mayst be restored again by grace, yet it shall not be without a wound; as the fish sometimes slip the hook, but go away wounded; which wound may be sad to thee, and long a-healing. And this thou hast experienced.

4 As fish in the water love deep places and wells, and are most frequently found there; so wicked men have a great love to carnal security, and have no will to strive against the stream. Fish love deep places best, where there is least noise O how careful are natural men to keep all quiet, that there may be nothing to disturb them in their rest in sin! they love to be secure, which is their destruction. O my soul, be-

beware of carnal security, of being secure, though plunged over head and ears in sin

5. As fish are altogether unprofitable as long as they are in the water, so are wicked men in their natural estate, they can do nothing that is really good; they are unprofitable to themselves, and unprofitable to others: what good they do to others, is more *per accidens* than *per se*, Rom. iii 12. How far must they then be mistaken, who think the wicked of the world the most useful in the place where they live! They may indeed be useful for carrying on designs for Satan's interest, or their own vain glory; but really to lay out themselves for God, they cannot.

III. Ministers are fishers by office; they are catchers of the souls of men, sent "to open the eyes of the "blind, and to turn them from darkness to light, and "from the power of Satan unto God," Acts xxvi 18. Preachers of the gospel are fishers; and their work, and that of fishers, agree in several things.

1. The design and work of fishers is to catch fish. This is the work that preachers of the gospel have taken in hand, even to endeavour to bring souls to Christ. Their design in their work should be the same. Tell me, O my soul, what is thy design in preaching? for what end dost thou lay the net in the water? is it to shew thy gifts, and to gain the applause of men? Oh! no. Lord, thou knowest my gifts are very small; and had I not some other thing than them to lean to, I had never gone to a pulpit. I confess, that, for as small as they are, the devil and my corruptions do sometimes present them to me in a magnifying glass, and so would blow me up with wind. But, Lord, thou knowest it is my work to repel these motions. An instance of this see in my Diary, Jan. 1. 1699. But of this see afterwards.

2. Their work is hard work; they are exposed to much cold in the water. So is the minister's work.

3. A storm that will affright others, they will venture

ture on, that they may not lose their fish. So should preachers of the gospel do.

4. Fishers catch fish with a net. So preachers have a net to catch souls with. This is the everlasting gospel, the word of peace and reconciliation, wherewith sinners are caught. It is compared to a net wherewith fishers catch fish,

(1) Because it is spread out, ready to catch all that will come into it, Is. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that "thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath "no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy "wine and milk, without money and without price." God excludes none from the benefits of the gospel that will not exclude themselves; it is free to all.

(2) Because as fish are taken unexpectedly by the net, so are sinners by the gospel. Zaccheus was little thinking on salvation from Christ, when he went up to the tree. Paul was not thinking on a sweet meeting with Christ, whom he persecuted, when he was going post-haste on the devil's errand; but the man is caught unexpectedly. Little wast thou thinking, O my soul, on Christ, heaven, or thyself, when thou went to the Newton of Whitsome *, to hear a preaching, when Christ first dealt with thee; there thou got an unexpected cast.

(3) As fish sometimes come near and touch the net, and yet draw back; so many souls are somewhat af-

* Whitsome is a parish in the presbytery of Chirnside, at a place in which, called Newton, the Rev. Mr Henry Erskine, who, in August 1662, had been ejected from Cornhill in Northumberland, began to exercise his ministry in a meeting-house, upon the coming out of King James's toleration, in 1687, and where he continued till the revolution, when he was settled at Chirnside. It was probably in the year 1687, that Mr Boston, then a boy only ten years of age, went from Duns, where his parents lived, to hear Mr Erskine, by whose ministry he was converted. He speaks of this worthy minister as his spiritual father, afterwards in this Soliloquy. This Mr Henry Erskine was father to the late excellent Mess. Ebenezer and Ralph Erskines, whose praise is in all the churches.

affected at the hearing of the gospel, and yet remain in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity. So Herod heard John the Baptist gladly; but yet the poor man was not caught. Wonder not then, O my soul, that thou seest some affected in the time of preaching; and yet when they are away again, all is worn off

(4.) Some fish that have not been taken fast hold enough by the net, struggle and get out again So some souls have their convictions, and may seem to be caught; but yet, alas! they stifle all their convictions, stay in the place of the breaking forth; their goodness is like the morning cloud, and as the early dew that soon passeth away. Wherefore, O my soul, if ever thou be taken up with exercised consciences, have a care that thou do not apply the cure before the wound be deep enough. Take all means to understand whether the soul be content to take Christ on his own terms or not. Alas! many this way, by having the wound scurfed over, are rather killed than cured.

(5.) All that are taken in the net do make some struggling to get free Even so every one whom the Lord deals with by his word and Spirit, make some kind of resistance, before they are thoroughly caught. *Cras, Domine*, says Augustine; *et modo, Domine, donec modo non haberet modum*. And this thou also knowest, O my soul, how thou wouldst have been content to have been out of the net. Oh! the wickedness of the heart of man by nature! opposite is it, and an enemy to all that may be for its eternal welfare. There is indeed a power in our will to resist, yea, and such a power as cannot but be exercised by the will of man, which can do nothing but resist, till the overcoming power of God, the *gratia victrix*, come and make the unwilling heart willing, Phil. ii 13.

(6.) Yet this struggling will not do with those which the net has fast enough. So neither will the resistance do that is made by an elect soul, whom God

God intends to catch. John vi 37 *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me.* Indeed God does not convert men to himself against their will, he does not force the soul to receive Christ; but he conquers the will, and it becomes obedient. He that was unwilling before, is then willing. O the power of grace! When God speaks, then men shall hear; then is it that the dead hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear do live.

(7.) In a net are many meshes in which the fish are caught. Such are the invitations made to sinners in the gospel, the sweet promises made to them that will come to Christ; these are the meshes wherewith the soul is catched. This then is gospel-preaching, thus to spread out the net of the gospel, wherein are so many meshes of various invitations and promises, to which if the fish do come, they are caught.—— But yet,

(8.) Lest the net be lifted up with the water, and so not fit for taking of fish, and the fish slight it, and pass under it; there are some pieces of lead put to it, to hold it right in the water, that it may be before them as they come. So lest invitations and promises of the gospel be slighted, there must be used some legal terrors and law-threatenings to drive the fish into the net. Thou seest then that both law and gospel are to be preached, the law as a pendicle of the gospel-net, which makes it effectual; the law being a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

(9.) The meshes must not be over wide, lest the fish run through. So neither must thy doctrine be general, without particular application, lest thou be no fisher of men. Indeed men may be the better pleased, when thou preachest doctrine so as wicked men may run out through and in through it, than when thou markest it so as to take hold of them: but be not a servant of men.

(10.) Neither must they be too neat and fine, and curiously wrought, lest they hold out the fish. So have

have a care, O my soul, of striving to make by wit any fine and curious discourse, which thy hearers cannot understand. Of this more afterwards.

5 Fishers observe in what places they should cast their nets, and where they may expect fish. So do thou, O my soul, observe where thou mayst catch souls. There are two pools wherein the net should be set.

(1.) In the public assemblies of the Lord's people. There it was that Lydia's heart was opened. The pool of ordinances sometimes is made healing water to souls pining away in their iniquity.

(2.) In private conference. Many times the Lord is pleased to bless this for the good of souls. Some have found it so. But more of these things afterwards, when I come to following of Christ.

6. Lastly, Fishers may toil long, and yet catch nothing; but they do not therefore lay aside their work. So may preachers preach long, and yet not catch any soul, Isa. xlix. 4. and liii. 1.; but they are not to give over for all that. O my soul, here thou art checked for thy behaviour at some times under the absence of Christ from ordinances, when thou hast been ready to wish thou hadst never taken it in hand. This was my sin: the good Lord pardon it. It becomes me better to lie low under God's hand, and to inquire into the causes of his withdrawing his presence from me and from ordinances, and yet to hold on in duty till he be pleased to lay me by. Have a care of that, O my soul, and let not such thoughts and wishes possess thee again. Forget not how God made thee to read this thy sin, in thy punishment, Diary, Nov. 13. 1698. Hold on, O my soul, and give not way to these discouragements. Thou knowest not but Christ may come and teach thee to let down the net at the right side of the ship, and thou mayst yet be a fisher of men. Trust God thou shalt yet praise him for the help of his countenance, as thou hast done, and perhaps for some souls that thou mayst be yet honoured to catch.

And thus I have briefly considered these things. But the main question that I would have resolved is, How I may come by this art? what way I shall take to be a fisher of men? how I may order and set the net, that it may bring in souls to God? this the great Master of assemblies sets down in the first part of the verse. Whence,

Observe, 2. O my soul, that the way for me to be a fisher of men, is to follow Christ. What it is to follow thee, O Lord, shew me; and, Lord, help me to do it.

Here two things are to be considered.

I. What following of Christ supposes and implies.
II. Wherein Christ is to be followed.

I. What following of Christ supposes and implies. *First*, It presupposes life. A dead man cannot follow any person; a dead preacher cannot follow Christ; there must be a principle of life, spiritual life in him, or else he is nought. Therefore have I said and maintained, that a man cannot be a minister *in foro Dei*, though he may *in foro eccl sie*, without grace in his heart. This is a spiritual following of Christ; and therefore presupposes a spiritual and heavenly principle. Tell me then, O my soul, what state art thou in? Thou wast once dead, that is sure, Eph. ii. 1. *dead in trespasses and sins*. Art thou raised out of thy grave? hast thou got a part in the first resurrection? has Christ breathed on thy dead and dry bones? or art thou yet void of spiritual life? art thou rotting away in thine iniquity? What sayest thou to this? If thou be yet dead, thy case is lamentable; but if thou be alive, what signs of life are there to be seen in thee? I have my own doubts of this, because of the prevailing of corruption: therefore I will see what I can say to this.

1. A man that hath the Spirit hath life, Rom. viii. 2. 9.;

2. 9.; but I think I have the Spirit: *ergo*, I have life. That I have the Spirit, I conclude from these grounds following.

(1.) I have light that sometimes I had not. See John xiv. 26 "The Comforter——shall teach you all "things, and bring all things to your remembrance "whatsoever I have said unto you." I see now otherwise than sometimes I saw. Once was I blind, but now I see though I see but men as trees Once was I darkness, but now am I light (though weak) in the Lord. This light makes me see,

[1.] My former darkness, the sad and miserable state that once I was in, ignorant of God, Christ, and religion. save going to the church, and keeping from banning and swearing, &c. which I was restrained from, from a child This makes me see my present darkness, 1 Cor. xiii 12 How little a portion do I know of thee, O God? My knowledge is but as the twilight.

[2.] It lets me see my heart-sins, my imperfections and shortcomings in the best of my duties; so that God might damn me for them. The hypocrites say, *Why have we fasted, and thou seest not?* &c Isa. lviii. 3 It lets me see the wanderings of my heart in duty and out of duty, yea, the sinfulness of the first risings of lust in mine heart, Rom vii and is still discovering the baseness of my heart unto me, so that I am forced to think and say, that at the best I am unclean, unclean.

[3.] It makes me to see Christ precious, (1 Pet. ii. 7.), altogether lovely, the chief among ten thousand, preferable to all the world; for whom, if my heart deceive me not, (Lord, thou knowest), I would undergo the loss of that which I most esteem in the world. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none "on earth that I desire besides thee." For indeed, "my "heart and flesh faints and fails; but thou art the "strength of my heart, O Lord," Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26.

[4] It lets me see my need of him; so that nothing

elſe but Chriſt, I am perſuaded can help me. When I have done what I can, I am but an unprofitable ſervant. If I ſhould do a thouſand times more than I do I count all but loſs and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord. My ſoul cries out for thee, O God, and follows hard after thee.

[5] The knowledge that I have of Chriſt, makes me truſt in him in ſome meaſure, Pſal. ix. 10.; though alas! my evil heart of unbelief creates a great deal of difficulty in that to me. I find him a preſent help in the time of trouble; therefore I endeavour to caſt my burden upon him. I know him to be a good Maſter; and therefore I lean on him for help for his own work. I know his grace is ſufficient for me; therefore, in temptation and trials, I endeavour to lift up my ſoul to him.

Rom. viii. 26

(2.) I feel help in duty from the Spirit. I know not what I ſhould pray for; but the Spirit helpeth my infirmities: Many times I have gone to prayer very dead, and have come away with life; I have gone with a drooping and fainting heart, and come away rejoicing; with an heart cloſed, and have come away with a heart enlarged, and have felt enlargement both as to words and affections; and this hath made me both thankful and more vile in mine own eyes, that God ſhould have done ſo with the like of me.

1 Chron. xxix 14.

Eph. iv. 19. Matth xi. 28.

2. He that hath ſenſe and feeling hath life; but I have ſenſe and feeling: *ergo*, I have life. My ſins are a burden to me, (Lord, thou knoweſt), my omiſſions and commiſſions, the ſins of my thoughts and of my life, the ſins of my youth, *&c.* and above all, that which is my daily trouble, is an evil, backſliding, and baſe heart, which I find deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked. This body of ſin and death makes me to groan, and

Jer. xvii. 9.

and long to be rid of it. And what a load it was to me this day, God knows. Rom. vii. 24.

I feel God's presence, which makes me to rejoice sometimes; at other times again I feel his absence. Thou, O Lord, hidest thy face, and I am troubled. His smiles are sweet as honey from the comb, and his frowns are bitter as death to my soul. Jan. 20. 1699 Psal. xxx. 7.

3. He in whom there is heat hath life; but I have a heat in my soul: *ergo*, I have life. I find a threefold flame, though weak, in my heart.

(1.) A flame of love to Christ. My soul loves him above all; and I have felt my love to Christ more vigorous within this short while, than for a considerable time before. Rom. v. 5.

Lord, put fewel to this flame. I have a love to his truths that I know, what God reveals to me of his word. I find sometimes his word sweeter to me than honey from the comb. It comforts and supports me. I cannot but love it; it stirs me up, and quickens my soul when dead. I love his commands, though striking against my corruptions. I love the promises, as sweet cordials to a fainting soul, as life from the dead to one trodden under foot by the apprehensions of wrath, or the prevailing of corruption. I love his threatnings as most just; my soul heartily approves them. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema, maranatha.* The least hoof of truth, that God makes known to me, I love; and, by grace, would endeavour to adhere to. I love those in whom the image of God does appear; though otherwise mean and contemptible, my heart warms towards them. I love his work, and am glad when it thrives, though alas! there is little ground for such gladness now. I love his ordinances, Psal. cxix. 19 Psal. xix. 10. Rom. vii. 22. 1 John iii. 14. Rom. i. 8. Psal. lxxxiv. 1. and

and what bears his ſtamp; though all this be but weak. I love his glory, that he ſhould be glorified, come of me what will.

Matth. v. 6 (2.) I find in my heart a flame of deſires. [1] After the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. My ſoul earneſtly deſires to be ſtript naked of my own righteouſneſs, which is as rags, and to be clothed and adorned with the robe of his righteouſneſs. This wedding-garment my ſoul affects; ſo ſhall I be found without ſpot, when the Maſter of the feaſt comes in to ſee the gueſts. My ſoul is ſatisfied, and acquieſces in juſtification by an imputed righteouſneſs, though, alas! my baſe heart would fain have a home-ſpun garment of its own ſome-

Pſal. xlii. 1. times [2] After communion with him. When I want it, my ſoul though ſometimes careleſs, yet, at other times, cries out, *O that I knew where I might find him!* I have found much ſweetneſs, in communion with God, eſpecially at the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, in prayer and meditation, hearing of the word, faithfully and ſeriouſly preached, and in preaching it myſelf, when the candle of the Lord ſhines on my tabernacle: then was it a ſweet exerciſe to my ſoul. I endeavour to keep it up when I have it, by watching over my heart, and ſending up ejaculations to God. When I want it, I cry to him for it, though, alas! I have been a long time very careleſs. Sometimes my ſoul longs for the day, when my mi-nority ſhall be over-paſt, and I be entered heir to *the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*; to be quit of this evil world; to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is beſt of all; eſpecially at three times (1.) When I get more than ordinarily near God, when my ſoul is ſatisfied as with marrow and fat, when my heart is nobilitated, and trampleth on the world. (2.) When I am wreſtling and groaning under the body of ſin and death, the evil heart: then fain would I be there, where Satan

Satan cannot tempt, and sin cannot enter; yea, when I have been much forsaken, at least as to comfort, Diary, Aug. 2. 1696, where is the most eminent instance of it. (3) When I preach, and see that the gospel hath not success, but people are unconcerned, and go on in their abominations.

(3.) I find in my heart some heat of zeal for God, which vents itself, [1] By endeavouring to be active for God in my station So when I was at K. I endeavoured to do something for God, though alas! it did some of them no good Before I entered on trials, one main motive was to have opportunity to give a testimony against sin, and to see if I could be an instrument to reclaim any soul from their wicked way. This I have, as the Lord enabled me, done, since I was a preacher, testifying against sin freely and plainly, and as earnestly as I could, by grace assisting me, though in weakness. And, Lord, thou knowest that my great desire is to catch men, and to get for that end my whole furniture from thee, laying aside my own wisdom. And if I could do this, how satisfying would it be to my soul, that desires to do good to others, though I myself should perish? Therefore do I not spare this weak body, and therefore have I desired never to be idle, but to go unsent-for sometimes. Yet my conscience tells me of much slackness in this point, when I have been in private with people, and have not reproved them as I ought, when they offended, being much plagued with want of freedom in private converse. This I have in the Lord's strength resolved against, and have somewhat now amended it. [2.] It vents itself in indignation against sin in myself and others. Many times have I thought on that of the apostle, *Yea, what revenge!* when I have been overcome by a temptation, being content as it were to be revenged on myself, and as it were content to subscribe a sentence of damnation against myself, and so to justify the Lord in his just proceedings against me. And, *Lord, do not I hate*

*those*

*those that hate thee! am I not grieved*
Psal. lxix 9 *with those that rise up against thee? The reproaches of them, have fallen on me.*

And my heart rises and is grieved, when I see transgressions, that they keep not thy law [3.] It vents itself in grieving for those things that I cannot help. Lord, thou knowest how weighty the sins of this land have been unto me, how they have lien and do lie somewhat heavy on me; and at this time in particular the laxness of many in joining with the people of these abominations, the unfaithfulness of some professors, the lack of zeal for God in not making a more narrow search for the accursed thing in our camp, now when God's wrath is going out violently against us, and not making an acknowledgement of sins and renewing our national vows, according as our progenitors did, many as it were thinking shame of of the covenant, of whom the church of Scotland may be ashamed.

Psal. xcii. 12, 13, 14. 4. Growth and motion is an evidence of life; I move forward towards heaven, my affections are going out after Christ, and endeavouring to make progress in a Christian walk. I think I discern a

2 Pet. iii. 18. growth of these graces in me. (1.) Of knowledge and acquaintance with Christ. I am more acquainted with Christ and his ways than before. Though I have not such uptakings of Christ as I ought to have, yet I have more than I have had in this respect sometimes before. (2.) A growth of love. If my heart deceive me not, I have found love to Christ within this month more lively and vigorous than before, my soul more affected with his absence from ordinance than ever. (3.) Of faith. I can, I think, trust God more now than before I have had more experience of his goodness and knowledge of his name; and therefore think I can cast my burden on the Lord better than before. But it is only swimming when the head is held up. Lord, increase my

my faith. I believe, Lord, help mine unbelief. (4.) Of watchfulness. I have felt the sad effects of unwatchfulness over my heart in times past. I feel the good of watchfulness now; my soul is habitually more watchful than before; neither dare I give such liberty to my heart as sometimes I gave. Yet for all this the Lord may well complain of me, that he is broken with my whorish heart But, Lord, thou knowest, it is also breaking to myself that it is so The Lord seal these things to me. (5) Of contempt of the world, which, blessed be God, is on the increase with me.

*Secondly*, Following of Christ implies a knowledge of the way that Christ took. No man can follow the example of another as such, unless he know what way he lived. So neither can any man follow Christ with respect to the catching of men in particular, unless he know Christ's way of catching souls, that is, so far as it may be followed by us. Acquaint then thyself, O my soul, with the history of the gospel, wherein this appears, and take special notice of these things, that thou mayst follow Christ. What a sad case must they be in that are not acquainted with this!

*Thirdly*, It supposes sense of weakness, and the need of a guide. A man that knows a way, and can do well enough without a guide, needs not follow another. And surely the want of this is the reason why many run before Christ, and go farther than his example ever called them; and others take a way altogether different from Christ's way, which is the product of their own conceited hearts and airy heads. But thou, O my soul, acknowledge thyself as a child in these matters, that cannot go unless it be led; as a stranger in a desart place, that cannot keep the right way without a guide. Acknowledge and be affected with thine own weakness and emptiness, which thou mayst well be persuaded of. And for this end reflect seriously, 1 On that word, 2 Cor. ii. 16.

*Who*

*W) is sufficient for these things?* No man is of himself sufficient; even the greatest of men come short of sufficiency. This may make thee then to be affected with insufficiency, who are so far below these men, as shrubs are below the tall cedars; and yet they cannot teach it of themselves. 2 Consider the weight of the work, even of preaching which is all that thou hast to do now. It is the concern of souls. By the foolishness of preaching it pleases the Lord to save them that believe, and as thou thoughtest yesterday, before thou went to the pulpit, it may seal the salvation of some, and the damnation of others. To preach in the Spirit in the power and demonstration thereof, is no easy matter. Thy pitiful gifts will not fit thee for this. 3 Reflect on what thou art when God is pleased to desert thee; how then thou tuggest and rowest, but it will not do, either in studying or delivering sermons. I think thou hast had as much of this as may teach thee to beware of taking thy burden on thy own soul, but to cast it on the Lord. See Diary, June 3 July 3. Dec. 31. 1698. Jan. 6. 1699. *&c.* 4. Consider what a small portion thou knowest of God. When thou art at the best, and when thou art in thy meridian, yet how low art thou? and how far short thou comest of what thou shouldst be at. Lastly, consider, that though thou hadst gifts like an angel, yet thou canst not convert a soul, unless Christ be with thee to do the work. Therefore acknowledge thyself a weak creature, insufficient for the work; and go not out in thy own strength, but in the name of the Lord; and so although thou be but as a stripling, thou mayst be helped to cast down the great Goliaths that defy the armies of the living God.

Jan 22. 1699.

*Fourthly*, It implies a renouncing of our own wisdom. It must not be the guide that we must follow, Matth. xvi. 24. Paul would not preach with wisdom of words, 1 Cor. i. 17.; he did not follow the rules of carnal wisdom. Therefore, O my soul, renounce thine

thine own wisdom. Seek the wisdom that is from above; seek to preach the words of the living God, and not thine own. Since thou wast most set to take this way, and prayed most that thou mightst not preach that which might be the product of thy own wisdom and natural reason, but that which might be given thee of the Holy Ghost, thou hast found that God hath signally countenanced thee Take not the way of natural wisdom, follow not the rules of carnal wisdom. Its language will always be, *Master, spare thyself;* have a care of thy credit and reputation among men. If thou speak freely, they will call thee a railer, and thy preaching reflections; every parish will scare at thee as a monster of men, and one that would preach them all to hell; and so thou shalt not be settled. Such and such a man, that has a great influence in a parish, will never like thee. That way of preaching is not the way to gain people; that startles them at the very first. You may bring them on by little and little, by being somewhat smooth at least at the first; for this generation is not able to abide such doctrine as that thou preachest. But hear thou and follow the rules of the wisdom that is from above: for the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; that which is in high esteem among men, is nought in the sight of God. The wisdom that is from above will tell thee, that thou must be denied to thy credit and reputation, &c. Matth xvi. 24. Luke xiv 26. It will tell thee, Let them call thee what they will, that thou must *cry aloud, and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet,* &c. Is lviii 1. It will tell thee, that *God has appointed the bounds of mens habitation,* Acts xvii. 26. It will tell thee, that *not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called* &c. 1 Cor. i 29. *Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, thou shalt speak God's words unto them,* Ezek ii. 7. It will shew thee rules quite contrary to those of carnal wisdom. Let me consider then what carnal wisdom says to me, and what the wisdom from above says.

Carnal Wisdom

Thy body is weak, spare it, and weary it not; it cannot abide toil, labour, and wearinefs; spare thyself then.

Spiritual Wisdom.

Your body is God's as well as your spirit; spare it not for glorifying of God, 1 Cor. vi. 20. *In wearinefs and painfulnefs.* 2 Cor xi 27. *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increafeth ftrength,* If. xl. 29. This thou haft experienced.

Labour to get neat and fine expreffions; for thefe do very much commend a preaching to the learned; and without thefe they think nothing of it.

Chrift fent thee to *preach the gofpel not with wifdom of words,* 1 Cor. i. 17 Go not to them with *excellency of fpeech, or of wifdom,* 1 Cor ii. 1. Let not thy fpeech and preaching be with *the enticing words of mans wifdom.* ver. 4

Endeavour to be fomewhat fmooth in preaching and calm; and do not go out upon the particular fins of the kind, or of the perfons to whom thou preacheft.

*Cry aloud, and fpare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet: fhew my people their fins,* If lviii. 1.— *Open rebuke is better than fecret love* Prov. xxvii. 5. *Study to fhew thyfelf approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth,* 2 Tim ii 15

If thou wilt not do fo, they will be irritated againft thee, and may create thee trouble: and what a foolifh thing would it be for thee to fpeak boldly to fuch a genera-

*He that rebuketh a man, afterwards fhall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue,* Prov xxv ii. 23 I have experience of this. *Fear them not, neither be afraid at*

tion as this, whose very looks are terrible?

*at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. I have made thy face strong against their faces*, Ezek. iii 8 9. Experience confirms this.

It is a dangerous way to speak freely, and condescend on particulars: there may be more hazard in it than thou art aware of.

*He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely*, Prov. x. 9. *Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved*, chap. xxviii. 18.

Thou wilt be looked on as a fool, as a monster of men; thou wilt be called a railer; and so lose thy reputation and credit, and thou hadst need to preserve that. Men will hate and abhor thee; and why shouldst thou expose thyself to these things?

*Thou must become a fool, that thou mayst be wise*, 1 Cor. iii. 18. *We are made a spectacle to the world*, chap iv. 9 see ver. 10. *The servant is not greater than his lord*, John v. 20. compared with chap. x. 20 *He hath a devil and is mad, why hear ye him?* If thou wilt be Christ's disciple, *thou must deny thyself*, Matth. xvi. 24. *If the world hate you, ye know it hated me before it hated you*, John xv. 18. says our Lord.

Great people especially will be offended at you, if you speak not fair to them, and court and caress them. And if you be looked down upon by great people, who are wise and mighty, what will you think of your preaching?

*Accept no man's person, neither give flattering titles to man: for, in so doing, thy Maker will soon take thee away*, Job xxxii. 21, 22. *Few of the rulers believe on Christ*, John vii. 48. *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble*

Our people are new come out from under Prelacy, and they would not desire to have sins told particularly, and especially old sores to be ripped up. They cannot abide that doctrine. Other doctrine would take better with them. Ho'd off such things; for it may well do them ill, it will do them no good.

If you will preach such things, yet prudence requires that you speak of them very wardy. Though conscience says you must, yet speak them somewhat covertly, that you may not offend them sore, and especially with respect to them that are but coming in yet, and do not fill them with prejudices at first; you may get occasion afterwards.

Be but fair especially to them that have the Broke in parishes, till you be settled in a parish to get

*noble are called*, 1 Cor. i. 26. *Speak thou God's word to kings, and be not ashamed*, Psal cxix. 46.

*Thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, for they are most rebellious*, Ezek. ii. 7. *Give them warning from me. If thou do it not, they shall die in their sins, but their blood will I require at thy hand*, chap. iii. 17, 18 *What the Lord saith to thee, that do thou speak*, 1 Kings xxii. 14.

*Cry aloud, and spare not*, Is. lviii. 1. *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully*, Jer. xlviii. 10. *Handle not the word of the Lord deceitfully*. Peter, at the first, told the Jews that were but coming in to hear, *Him* (Christ) *ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*, Acts ii 23. *Work while it is called to-day; the night cometh wherein thou canst not work*, John ix. 4.

*To have respect of persons is not good; for, for a piece of bread that man will transgress*, Prov. xxviii.

stipend. If you will not do so, you may look for toiling up and down then; for parishes will scare at you, and will not call you, and how will you live? And so such a way of preaching will be to your loss, whereas otherwise it might be better with you.

xxviii. 21. *The will of the Lord be done*, Acts xxi. 14. *God hath determined your time, before appointed, and the bounds of your habitation*, Acts xvii. 26. *and his counsel shall stand, oppose it who will*, Is. xlvi. 10. *It is God that sets the solitary in families*, Psal. lxviii. 6. *If thou be faithful, thou shalt abound with blessings; but if thou make st haste to be rich, thou shalt not be innocent*, Prov. xxviii. 20.

Thus thou seest, O my soul, how that carnal wisdom, notwithstanding it speaks fair and with a good deal of seeming reason, is quite contrary to the wisdom that is from above. It promiseth fair, but its promises are not always performed; it threatens sore, but neither do its threatenings always come to pass; it makes molehills mountains, and mountains molehills: therefore reject the wisdom of the world, for it is foolishness with God. Carnal policy would make thee fear him that can but kill the body, yea that cannot do so much now, and to cast off the true fear of God. O my soul, remember that word, and make use of it for strengthening thee, Prov xxix 25. *The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be safe.* Never go to seek temporal profit, by putting thy soul in hazard; but *wait* thou *on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land*: for his way is the safest way, however carnal wisdom may speak otherwise of it, and may account the following of it mere folly: but remember thou, that *the foolishness of God is wiser than men*, 1 Cor. i 27. Psal. xxxvii. 34.

*Fifthly*, It supposes, that we must not make men our rule, to follow them any farther than they follow Christ. *Be ye followers of me*, says the apostle, *as I am of Christ*, 1 Cor. xi. 1. Wherein they follow Christ I may follow them, but in nothing else. All men are fallible; the greatest of men have had their own spots. Luther's opinion of Christ's corporal presence in the sacrament affords a notable instance of this. Therefore, O my soul, let not man's authority prevail with thee to go off the road at all. If Christ himself tell thee not, O my soul, where he feedeth, thou mayst be left to turn aside to the flocks of his companions. Have a care of putting the servants of the Lord in his own room: but follow thou him.

II. Wherein is Christ to be followed? what are those things in him that I must imitate him in? what was the copy that he did cast, which I must write after, in order to my being a fisher of men? What he did by divine power is inimitable; I am not called to follow him, in converting sinners by my own power; to work miracles for the confirmation of the doctrine that I preach, *&c.* But there are some things wherein he is imitable, and must be followed by preachers, if they would expect to be made fishers of men.

*First*, Christ took not on him the work of preaching the gospel without a call, Is. lxi. 1. "For, (says he) "the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the "Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto "the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-"hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the "opening of the prison to them that are bound." In this he must be followed by those that would be catchers of men. He was sent by the Father to preach the gospel; he went not to the work without his Father's commission. Men must have a call to this work, Heb. v. 4. They that run unsent, that take on the Rom. x. work without a call from God, cannot expect 14. to do good to a people, Jer. xxiii. *I sent them not,*

*not, therefore they shall not profit this people.* Tell me then, O my soul, whether thou hast thus followed Christ or not? Hadst thou a call from God to this work of the preaching of the gospel? or hast thou run unsent?

In answer to this, I must consider that there is a two-fold call, an extraordinary and an ordinary call. The first of these I was not to seek, nor may I pretend to it. The question then is, Whether I had an ordinary call from God or not to preach the gospel?

There are these four things in an ordinary call, which do make it up

1. Knowledge of the doctrine of the Christian religion above that of ordinary professors, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. This I endeavoured to get by study, and prayer unto the Lord; and did attain to it in some measure, though far below the pitch that I would be at. My knowledge was lawfully tried by the church, and they were satisfied.

2. Aptness to teach, some dexterity of communicating unto others that knowledge, 1 Tim. iii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 2. This was also tried by the church, and they were satisfied. This hath been acknowledged by others whom I have taught; and God has given me some measure of it, however small.

3. A will some way ready to take on the work of preaching the gospel, 1 Pet. v. 2. This I had, for any thing I know, since ever the Lord dealt with my soul, unless it was in a time of distress. And though I did a long time sit the call of the church, in not entering on trials, when they would have had me, yet this was not for want of will, but ability for the work, and want of clearness for entering on such a great work at that time. I had notwithstanding some desire to that work, which desire my conscience bears me witness, did not arise from the desire of worldly gain; for I would have desired that then, and would go on in the work now, though there were no such thing to be had by it, yea through grace, though I

should meet with trouble for it. Neither was it the love of vain-glory, Lord, thou knowest, but that I might be capable to do something for God. I remember, that when I was a boy at the school, I desired to be a preacher of the gospel, because of all men ministers were most taken up about spiritual things. This my desire to the work did then run upon.

4. The call of the church, which I had without any motion from myself, not only to enter on trials, but, being approved, to preach the gospel as a probationer for the ministry; which does say, that what I have done in this work, I have not done without a call from God in an ordinary way, and that I have not run unsent. For confirmation of this my call, I refer to my Diary, some things to this purpose being noted there, all which I cannot here set down. Perhaps, if leasure permit, I shall extract them by themselves in order. Blessed be the Lord that made my darkness as noon-day.

*Secondly*, Christ designed his Father's glory in the work. It was not honour, applause, and credit from men that he sought, but purely the Father's glory. Men that design not this, cannot be useful to the church, if it be not *per accidens*. This all actions are to level at; it is that which in all things should be designed as the ultimate end. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* Thou seest then that thou, O my soul, must follow Christ in this, if thou wouldst be a fisher of men. Lift up thy heart to this noble end, and in all, especially in thy preaching of the gospel, keep this before thine eyes. Beware of seeking thy own glory by preaching. Look not after popular applause; if thou do, thou hast thy reward; look for no more. O my soul, invert not the order, Cant. viii 12. "Thou, O "Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep "the fruit thereof two hundred." Have a care of taking a thousand to thyself, and giving God only two hundred.

Matth vi. 2.

dred. Let his honour be before thine eyes; trample on thy own credit and reputation, and sacrifice it, if need be, to God's honour. And to help thee to this, consider,

1. That all thou hast is given thee of God. What hast thou that thou hast not received? What an unreasonable thing is it then not to use for his glory what he gives thee; yea, what ingratitude is it? and dost thou not hate the character of an ungrateful person? *Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris.*

2 Consider that what thou hast is a talent given thee by thy great Master to improve till he comes again. If thou improve it for him, then thou shalt get thy reward. If thou wilt make thy own gain thereby, and what thou shouldst improve for him, thou improve for thyself, what canst thou look for then, but that God shall take thy talent from thee, and command to cast thee as an unprofitable and unfaithful servant into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth? God has given some great talents; if they improve them for vain-glory to themselves to gain the popular applause, or the Hosannas of the learned, and so sacrifice all to their own net; what a sad meeting will such have at the great day with Christ? What master would endure that servant, to whom he has given money wherewith to buy a suit of good cloaths to his master, if he should take that money, and buy therewith a suit to himself, which his master should have had? How can it be thought, that God will suffer to go unpunished such a preacher as he has given a talent of gifts to, if he shall use these merely to gain a stipend or applause to himself therewith, not respecting the glory of his Master? Wo to thee, O my soul, if thou take this path wherein deceivers of mens souls and of their own go.

3. Consider that the applause of the world is nothing worth. It is hard to be gotten; for readily the applause of the unlearned is given to him whom the learn-

learned despise, and the learned applaud him whom the common people care not for. And when it is got, what have you? A vain empty puff of wind. They think much of thee, thou thinkest much of thyself, and in the mean time God thinks nothing of thee. Remember, O my soul, what Christ said to the Pharisees, Luke xvi. 15. "Ye are they which justify your-"selves before men, but God knoweth your hearts. "For that which is highly esteemed among men, is an "abomination in the sight of God." Let this scare thee from seeking thyself.

4. Consider, that seeking thy own glory is a dreadful and abominable thing. (1.) In that thou then puttest thyself in God's room. His glory should be that which thou shouldst aim at, but then thy base self must be sacrificed too. O tremble at this, O my soul, and split not on this rock, otherwise thou shalt be dashed in pieces. (2.) In that it is the most gross dissembling with God that can be. Thou pretendest to preach Christ to a people; but seeking thy own glory, thou preachest thyself, and not him. Thou pretendest to be commending Christ and the ways of God to souls, and yet in the mean time thou commendest thyself. Will Christ sit with such a mocking of him? O my soul, beware of it; look not for it, but for his glory. Who would not take it for a base affront, to send a servant or a friend to court a woman for him, if he should court her for himself? And will not Christ be avenged on self-preaching ministers much more? (3.) In that it is base treachery and cruelty to the souls of hearers, when a man seeks to please their fancy more than to gain their souls, to get people to approve him more than to get them to approve themselves to God. This is a soul-murdering way, and it is, dear-bought applause that is won by the blood of souls. O my soul, beware of this. Let them call thee what they will; but seek thou God's glory and their good.

5. Consider that so to do is a shrewd sign of a graceless, Christless, and faithless heart, John v. 44.

*How*

*How can ye believe, that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?* A grain of faith, will cure this lightness of the head and heart.

6. Consider, O my soul, thy own vileness? What art thou but a poor lump of clay, as to thy body, that will soon return to the dust, and be a sweet morsel for the worms that now thou trampleſt upon! Hast thou not seen how loathsome the body is many times in life, by filthy boils and other noisome diseases, and after death what an ugly aspect it has? Forget not the sight that thou sawest once in the church yard of Dunse, how a body perhaps sometime beautiful was like thin mortar, but much more vile and abominable. The time will come that thou wilt be such thyself. But what art thou as to thy heart, but a vile, base, and ugly thing, so many filthy idols to be found there, like a swarm of the worst of vermine? Art thou not as a cage full of unclean birds! What thoughtest thou of thyself on Monday night, Jan. 16. 1699.? What unbelief sawest thou there, what baseness of every kind? And what day goes over thee, but thou seest still something in thee to humble thee? And what wast thou that God has employed in this work? Those that were sometime thy fellows are mean and despised; and wilt thou for all this seek thy own glory? Wo unto thee if thou dost so.

7. Consider, That "Him that honoureth God, "God will honour; but he that despiseth him, shall "be lightly esteemed." *Have respect*, O my soul, with Moses, *to the recompense of reward*, and beware of preferring thy own to the interest of Christ, lest thou be classed among those that seek their own, and not the things of Christ.

8. Lastly, Consider what Christ has done for thee. Forget not his goodness, his undeserved goodness to such a base wretch as thou art. Remember him from the land of the Hermonites, and from Mizar-hill; and

and let love to him predominate in thee, and thou shalt then be helped to sacrifice all to his glory.

*Thirdly*, Christ had the good of souls in his eye. He came to seek and to save that which was lost; he came to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So he sent out the apostle to *open the eyes of the blind, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*. Follow Christ in this, O my soul, that thou mayst be a fisher of men. When thou studiest thy sermons, let the good of souls be before thee; when thou preachest, let this be thy design, to endeavour to recover lost sheep, to get some brands plucked out of the burning; to get some converted, and brought in to thy Master. Let that be much in thy mind, and be concerned for that, whatever doctrine thou preachest. Consider, O my soul, for this effect,

1. What the design of the gospel is. What is it but this? This is the *finis operis*; and if it be not the *finis operantis*, it is very lamentable. It is the everlasting gospel that Christ has made manifest, declaring the will of God concerning the salvation of man.

2. Consider wherefore God did send thee out. Was it to win a livelihood to thyself? Woe to them that count gain godliness; that will make the gospel merely subservient to their temporal wants. Rather would I perish for want than win bread that way. Well then, was it not to the effect thou mightst labour to gain souls to Christ? Yea, it was. Have a care then that thou be not like some that go to a place, being sent thither by their master, but forget their errand, when they come there, and trifle away their time in vanity and fooleries.

3. Consider the worth of souls. If thou remember that, thou canst not but have an eye to their good. The soul is a precious thing: which appears, if you consider, (1.) Its noble endowments, adorned with understanding, capable to know the highest object; will to chuse the same; affections to pursue after it,

to

to love God, hate sin, in a word, to glorify God here, and to enjoy him here and hereafter. (2.) It must live or die for ever. It shall either enjoy God through all the ages of eternity, or remain in endless torments for evermore. (3.) No worldly gain can counterbalance the loss of it. "What shall it profit a man, if he "should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? "or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (4.) It cost Christ his precious blood ere it could be redeemed. It behoved him to bear the Father's wrath, that the elect should have borne through all eternity; and no less would redeem it. So that the redemption of the soul is indeed precious. (5.) Christ courts the soul. He stands at the door, and knocks, to get in. The devil courts it with his baits and allurements. And wilt thou, O my soul, be unconcerned for the good of that which is so much courted by Christ and the devil both? Be ashamed to stand as an unconcerned spectator, lest thou shew thyself none of the Bridegroom's friends.

4. Consider the hazard that souls are in. Oh! alas, the most part are going on in the high way to destruction and that blind-folded. Endeavour then to draw off the vail. They are as brands in the fire: wilt thou then be so cruel as not to be concerned to pluck them out? If so, thou shalt burn with them, world without end, in the fire of God's vengeance, and the furnace of his wrath, that shall be seven times more hot for unconcerned preachers than others.

5. Consider what a sad case thou thyself wast in, when Christ concerned himself for thy good. Thou wast going on in the way to hell as blind as a mole; at last Christ opened thine eyes, and let thee see thy hazard, by a preacher * that was none of the unconcerned Gallio's, who spared neither his body, his credit, nor

Worthy Mr H. Erskine.

* See the foot-note above, p. 10. Several remarkable anecdotes of this eminent minister may be seen in Wodrow's History of the Sef-

nor reputation, to gain thee, and the like of thee. And wilt thou preach unconcerned for others? I ſhould abhor myſelf as the vileſt monſter, in ſo doing. Lord, my ſoul riſes at it, when I think on it. My ſoul hates, and loaths that way of preaching: but without thee, I can do nothing. Lord, rather ſtrike me dumb, than ſuffer me to preach unconcerned for the good of ſouls; for ſo I ſhould murder neither my own ſoul, nor thoſe of others.

6. Conſider that unconcernedneſs for the good of ſouls in preaching, argues, (1.) A dead lifeleſs heart, a loveleſs ſoul, with reſpect to Chriſt. If thou haſt any life or love to Chriſt, dareſt thou be unconcerned in this matter? Nay, ſure, he that has life will move; and he that hath love, will be concerned for the propagating of Chriſt's kingdom. (2.) Unbelief of the threatnings of God eſpecially. For if thou believe that the wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God, thou canſt not preach to them as if thou wert telling a tale. If thou believe that they muſt depart into everlaſting fire, thy heart will not be ſo frozen as to be unconcerned for them. The ſight of it by faith will thaw thy frozen heart. (3.) A ſtupid heart, and ſo a hateful frame. Who would not abhor a watchman that ſaw the enemy coming on, if he ſhould bid them only in the general provide to reſiſt their enemies, or ſhould tell them that the enemy were coming on, ſo unconcernedly as they might ſee he cared not whether they ſhould live or periſh? And what a hateful ſtupidity is it in a preacher of the goſpel to be unconcerned for ſouls, when they are in ſuch hazard?

7. The devil ſhames ſuch preachers. He goes about like a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour;

Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, vol. 2. p. 256. and in CALAMY's continuation of the account of the ejected miniſters, vol. 2. p. 678. ET SEQ. Mr Boſton gives a particular account of his converſion in his Diary and Memoirs, which it is hoped will in time be publiſhed, as has been deſired by many.

vour; and they, set to keep souls, creep about like a snail. He is in earnest when he tempts; but such are unconcerned whether people hear, or forbear to hear their invitations, reproofs, *&c.* Yea, how concerned are the devil's ministers that agent his business for him? They will compass sea and land to gain one proselyte. And shall the preachers of the gospel be unconcerned?

8 If it be so that thou be unconcerned for the good of souls, it seems thou camest not in by the door, but hast broken over the wall, and art but a thief and a robber, John x 1. compared with ver. 12. "He that "is an hireling, seeth the wolf coming, fleeth, and "leaveth the sheep, and the wolf catcheth them. "Ver. 15. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hire-"ling, and careth not for the sheep." O my soul, if at any time thou findest thy heart unconcerned then, not having the good of souls before thee, remember this.

9 Lastly, thou canst not expect God's help, if thou forgettest thy errand. Hast thou not known and experienced, that these two, God's help in preaching, and concernedness for the good of souls, have gone with thee *pari passu?* O my soul, then endeavour to be much in following of Christ this way, setting the good of souls before thine eyes; and if thou dost so, thou mayst be a fisher of men, though thou knowest it not.

*Fourthly*, Christ had not only the good of souls before his eyes, but he was much affected with their case; it lay heavy on his spirit. There are these four things wherein this appeared, that occur to me, with which he was much affected.

1. He had compassion on the multitude, because they were as sheep without a shepherd, Matth. ix. 36. That the people wanted true pastors, was affecting to him; he had compassion on them. Follow Christ in this, O my soul; pity them that wander as sheep without a shepherd. And let this consideration move thee, when thou goest to preach in planted congrega-

tions, where thou wilt even see many that are wandering, though they have faithful pastors *. Look on them as sheep not better for them than if they wanted a shepherd But especially when thou goest to vacant congregations, pity them, commiserate their case, as sheep wanting a shepherd; which no doubt will be a notable means to make thee improve well the little time allowed thee for gathering them in. Be affected with their case; and, for this end, consider,

(1.) That such are in a perishing condition: *Where no vision is, the people perish.* They are ignorant, no wonder, they have none to instruct them; they have lean souls, no wonder, they have none to break the bread of life to them; they wander from God's way, they have none to watch over them, and so the devil takes his opportunity.

This was written while I preached in the presbytery of Stirling.

(2.) Consider that for the most part here at least, people are deprived of watchmen, in regard of the malignancy and tickleishness of their superiors; so that though the people would ever so gladly receive one to break the bread of life to them, yet they cannot get their will, by reason of these keeping it from them †. It would make thy heart to relent, if thou sawest a child that would be content to have a pedagogue to guide him, seeing he acknowledges he cannot do it himself, if notwithstanding his tutor should not allow him one, but

* The author probably speaks here of people in different parishes, who, though privileged with faithful ministers, yet, through attachment to Prelacy, would not hear them; or of some people called Cameronians or Old Dissenters, who refused to countenance the revolution church, because she had not renewed the covenants. Mr Boston met with no little trouble from these last after his settlement at Ettrick. How far will misguided zeal lead some otherwise well-meaning people?

† Some of the curates, through the favour of the great, continued in their churches for many years after the revolution, in several parts of the kingdom, and particularly in some parishes belonging to the synod of Perth and Stirling, as well as the north.

but ſtand in the way of it, and ſo the child be loſt for want of a pedagogue. So, O my ſoul, commiſerate thou the caſe of thoſe who would fain have one to watch over their ſouls, but yet they that ſhould employ their authority, power, wit, &c. to find out one for them, either lie by or oppoſe the ſame.

(3.) Conſider the many ſouls that go out of time into eternity, during the time that they want a ſhepherd. They have none to inſtruct them, none to let them ſee their hazard, none to comfort them, when death comes, but they ſlip away, many of them at leaſt, as the brutes that periſh. Thou haſt found this to have been a cauſe of thy commiſerating ſuch before now, when thou haſt ſpoken to ſuch being a dying. If this be well conſidered, and laid to heart, thou canſt not but pity them on that very account, which will ſtir thee up to employ the little time thou haſt among them, ſo as they may be fitted for death.

2. Chriſt wept, becauſe people in their day did not know, *i. e.* do, the things that belonged to their peace, Luke xix. 41, 42. When he thought upon this their ſtupidity, it made the tears trinkle down his precious cheeks. O my ſoul, thou haſt this ground of mourning, this day, where-ever thou goeſt. Who are they that are concerned to do what is neceſſary to be done in order to their peace with God? Few or none are brought in to Chriſt. It is rare to hear now of a ſoul converted; but moſt part are ſleeping on in their ſins in this their day, like to ſit the day of God's patience with them, till patience be turned into fury. Many heart-melting conſiderations to this purpoſe may be found. I ſhall only ſay this *in cumulo*, that ſuch a caſe is moſt deplorable, in the noon tide of the day that people ſhould venture on the feud of ſuch a dreadful enemy as God is, and ſhould ſit as quiet even when the ſword of vengeance is hanging by a hair over their heads, and notwithſtanding that every day may be, for ought I know, their laſt day, every ſermon the laſt that ever they ſhall hear, and that ere the next

day these enemies shall be made to rencounter with the terrible and dreadful Majesty who shall go through them as thorns and briers, and burn them up together, by the fire of his wrath world without end. O my soul, how canst thou think of this, and not be more affected with the case of people as they are now a days? Sure if thou couldst weep, here is ground enough for tears of blood.

3. He was grieved for the hardness of people's hearts, Mark iii 5. It was ground of grief to the Lord Jesus, that people were so hardened, that no means used for their amendment would do them good. Follow Christ in this, O my soul; be grieved and affected with the hardness of the hearts of this generation. O what hardness of heart mayst thou see in every corner, whither thou goest, and where thou preachest, most part being as unconcerned as the very stones of the wall; and say what thou wilt, either by setting before them alluring promises, or dreadful threatnings, yet people are hardened against both, none relenting for what they have done, or concerned about it, though thou wouldst preach till thy eyes leap out. O happy they whose time God has brought to a period, and taken to himself! Happy servants whom God has called out of the vineyard, before the ground grow so hard that almost all labour was in vain! This is a time of mourning for the preachers of the gospel, for people are strangely hardened. Which is the more lamentable, O my soul, if thou consider, (1.) What God has done even for this generation. He has taken off from our necks the yoke of tyranny and arbitrary power, and has given deliverance from Prelatic bondage; and yet for all this the generation is hardened. (2) If thou consider how the Lord has been dealing with us by rods. For some time there was great dearth of fodder for beasts; yet that stirred us not up. Afterwards was death of cattle; yet we have not returned to the Lord.

Lord. Then followed death of men, women, and children. He has sent blasting among our corns. This is now, I suppose, the fourth year of our dearth *. And for all these things we remain hardened. *O Lord, thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they refuse to receive correction; they make their faces harder than a rock, they refuse to return.* What shall be the end of such hardness as this? (3.) It is yet more lamentable, in regard the plague of hardness seems to be universal. It is not only the wicked, or openly profane, or those that have no religion, but the professors of religion that are hardened in part. Oh my soul, this is a day wherein Scotland's pillars are like to fail, a day wherein the hands of our Moseses are like to fall, and Amalek is like to prevail. Many professors desire to hear the causes of God's wrath searched into, but they are not mourning over them; and truly it is most lamentable, that those among us who as so many Joshuas should be discovering the Achans in our camp, that are the troublers of Israel, by a strange kind of dealing are very wary in meddling therewith, or to shew them unto people †. And it is much to be feared, that there

* The author here mentions the great dearth and famine that prevailed in Scotland for several years before the 1700, chiefly owing to unfavourable harvests. Of this melancholy accounts may be seen in several pamphlets published at that time. At this day it is too evident the Lord is exercising us in some measure with the same judgement, while still greater hardness of heart and impenitency prevails among all ranks, accompanied with monstrous luxury and abuse of mercies, greater than ever was known in this poor kingdom. God grant we may not again experience this judgement, of the breaking of the staff of bread, in the same dreadful manner as our ancestors felt it. "Prepare to meet thy God, "O Israel."

† The author probably means some people who had felt the rigour of the persecution in the infamous reigns before the revolution, or were attached to the testimony of these sufferers, and were grieved that a more particular and full enumeration of the grounds of the Lord's controversy was not made in acts for fasts emitted by the church after the revolution; who, however,

there are among us ſome accurſed things that are not yet found out. O that God would put it in the hearts of Zion's watchmen to diſcover what theſe Achans are, and that preachers were obliged even by the church to ſpeak more freely of the ſins of the land. But, alas! O Lord, why haſt thou hardened all of us from thy fear? (4) If thou conſider, that this hardneſs of heart is a token of ſad things yet to come. *Who hath hardened himſelf againſt God, and proſpered?* Job x 4. Alas! it is a ſad prognoſtic of a further ſtroke, that ſeeing we will not be ſoftened either by word or rod, therefore the Lord will thus do to us; and ſeeing he will do thus, we may prepare to meet the Lord coming in a way of more ſevere judgement againſt us. Sad it is already; many families are in a deplorable condition, and yet nothing bettered by the ſtroke; and what a ſad face will this land have, if it be continued? Spare, O Lord, thine inheritance, thy covenanted people, and make us rather fall on ſuch methods as may procure the removal of the ſtroke. Theſe, and many other things, O my ſoul, may indeed make thee grieved for the hardneſs of this generation.

*Fifthly*, Chriſt was much in prayer; and that, 1. Before he preached. as Luke ix 18. Follow him in this, O my ſoul. Thou haſt much need to pray before thou preacheſt. Be buſy with God in prayer, when thou art thinking on dealing with the ſouls of men. Let thy ſermons be ſermons of many prayers. Well doth prayer become every Chriſtian, but much more a preacher of the goſpel. Three things, ſaid Luther, make a divine, *tentatio, meditatio, et precatio.* Be ſtirred up, O my ſoul, to this neceſſary work; and for this end conſider, 1. That

were not ſuitably employed in mourning over them. And he alſo inſinuates the policy of ſome leaders in the church, by whoſe means chiefly a thorough ſcrutiny into the grounds of the Lord's controverſy with the church and land at this time, was in a great meaſure impeded. But if there was ground of complaint for this, at that time, how ſad is our preſent caſe, when there has not been a national faſt for ſeveral years, and not one appointed by the church for more than forty!

1. That thou canst not otherwise say of thy preaching, *Thus saith the Lord.* How wilt thou get a word from God, if thou do not seek it; and how canst thou seek it but by earnest prayer? If otherwise thou mayst get something that is the product of thy empty head to mumble over before the people, and spend a little time with them in the church. But O it is a miserable preaching where the preacher can say, *Thus say I to you*, but no more; and cannot say, *Thus saith the Lord.*

2 Consider thy own insufficiency and weakness, together with the weight of the work, *Who is sufficient for these things?* which if thou do, thou wilt not dare study without prayer, nor yet pray without study, when God allows thee time for both. It is a weighty work to bring sinners in to Christ, to pluck the brands out of the fire Hast thou not great need then to be serious with God before thou preach?

3. Consider that word, Jer. xxiii. 22. "But if they "had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people "to hear my words, then they should have turned "them from their evil way." There is no doubt but preachers not standing in God's counsel this day, and not making men to hear God's words, is one great reason of the unsuccessfulness of the gospel. Now this way, to wit, prayer in faith, is the most proper expedient for acquaintance with the counsel of God. Neglect it not then, O my soul, but be much in the duty.

*Lastly*, Remember, that thou hast found much good of such a practice, and hast found much of the Lord's help both in studying and preaching, by so doing. For which cause thou allottest the Sabbath morning entirely to that exercise, and meditation, if thou canst get it done. Wherefore let this be thy work. And there are these things which thou wouldst specially mind to pray for with respect to this.

(1.) That thou mayst have a word from the Lord to deliver unto them; that thou mayst not preach to them the product of thy own wisdom, and that which merely

merely flows from thy reason; for this is poor heartless preaching.

(2.) That thy soul may be affected with the case of the people to whom thou preachest. If that be wanting, it will be tongue-preaching, but not heart-preaching.

(3.) That thy heart may be inflamed with zeal for the glory of thy Master; that out of love to God, and love to souls thy preaching may flow.

(4.) That the Lord may preach it into thy own heart, both when thou studiest and deliverest it. For if this be not, thou shalt be like one that feeds others, but starves himself for hunger; or like a way-mark, that shews the way to men, but never moves a foot itself.

(5.) That thou mayst be helped to deliver it; and that, (1.) With a suitable frame, thy heart being affected with what thou speakest; (2.) Faithfully, keeping up nothing that the Lord gives thee; and, (3.) Without confusion of mind, or fear of man.

(6.) That thou mayst have bodily strength allowed for the work, that thy indisposition disturb thee not.

*Lastly*, That God would countenance thee in the work with his presence and power in ordinances, to make the word spoken a convincing and converting word to them that are out of Christ; a healing word to the broken; confirming to the weak, doubting and staggering ones, *&c.*; that God himself would drive the fish into the net, when thou spreadest it out. In a word, that thou mayst be helped to approve thyself to God, as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2. After preaching, Christ was taken up in this work, Mark vi. 46. Matth. xiv. 23. *And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray.* Follow Christ in this, O my soul. It is better to do this, than go away with the great people in the afternoon; which I shun as much as I can; and when at any time I do it, it is a kind of torment to

to me; which I have shunned, and do resolve to shun more; and if at any time I be necessitated to go, that I shall spend more time alone through grace. Pray to God. O my soul, that thy labours be not unsuccessful; that what thou hast delivered, may not be as water spilt on the ground. Pray for pardon of thy failings in public duties; and that God may accept of thy mite which thou giveſt with a willing mind; that he would not withdraw his blessing because of thy failings; but that he would be pleased to water with the dew of heaven the ground wherein thou didst sow the seed, that it may spring up in due time; that the word preached may be as a nail fastened by the Master of assemblies, so as the devil may not be able to draw it out. Think not, O my soul, that thy work is over, and thou hast no more to do, when the people are dismissed. No, no; it is not so. Think with thyself, that the devil was as busy as thou wast, when thou wast preaching; and that afterwards he is not idle. And shall he be working to undo thy work, and thou unconcerned to hold it together? O no; it must not be so; God will not be pleased with this. And alas! I have been too slack in this point before this: Lord, help me to amend. If a man had a servant that would go out and sow his seed very diligently and faithfully; but would come in, and sit down idle when it is sown, and forget to harrow it, and hide it with the earth; would the master be well pleased with him? yea, would he not be highly displeased, because the fowls would come and pick it up? So, O my soul, if thou shouldst be never so much concerned to get good seed, and never so faithful and diligent in sowing of it; yet if after thou turn careless, and take not the way to cover it, by serious seeking to the Lord, that he may keep it in the hearts of people, and make it to prosper, the devil may pick it all up; and where is thy labour then; and how will the Lord be pleased with thee! Therefore pray more frequently, cry more fervently to God,

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when the public work is over, than thou haſt done; and endeavour to be as much concerned when it is over, as when thou waſt going to it. I do not doubt, but many times, when thou preacheſt, ſome get checks and convictions of guilt; ſome perhaps are ſtrengthened; but both impreſſions wear off very ſoon. I fear thou muſt confeſs, and take with a ſinful hand in this, in that thou doſt not enough labour to get the ſeed covered when it is ſown, and the nail driven farther in when it is entered. Though many times thy body is wearied after the public work, yet ſure thou mayſt do more than thou doſt; and if thy ſoul were more deeply affected, the wearineſs of body would not be ſo much in thy mind; but thou wouldſt trample on it, that thou might get good done by thy work, and ſouls might not always thus be robbed by that greedy vulture and roaring lion, the enemy of thy own ſalvation, and the ſalvation of others. Although he has been as buſy to do harm all the day to ſouls as thou haſt been to do good, yet he will not complain of wearineſs at night. Take courage, then, O my ſoul, and be ſtrong in the Lord; and do not give it over to this enemy; endeavour to hold him at the ſtaff's end. Thou haſt a good ſecond; Chriſt is concerned for his own ſeed as well as thou. Go on then, and be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and let that ravenous fowl never get a grain away as long as thou canſt get it kept from him. Thus then, O my ſoul, follow Chriſt, in being taking up in this ſo neceſſary an exerciſe. Thy Lord and Maſter had no wants to get made up, there was no fear of his failing in this work of the goſpel; yet he prayed, to give all, and eſpecially preachers of his word, an example. Lay not aſide the pattern then, but write after his copy even in this.

*Sixthly*, Chriſt contemned the world; he ſlighted it as not meet for any of his followers. He became poor, that we might become rich. He gave himſelf entirely, at leaſt after

Matth. viii. 20.

after his inauguration, to matters that concerned the calling he had to the work of the gospel, John ix. 4. All, especially preachers, are to follow Christ in the contempt of the world. Yet we must beware of imitating him in those things which we are not commanded to follow, as voluntary poverty. this being a part of his satisfaction for the sins of the elect Neither doth this exeem the preachers of the gospel from a lawful provision of things necessary for themselves. or others they are concerned in: for the apostle tells us, that he is worse than an infidel, who doth not provide for his family, 1 Tim. v. 8 where church-men are not excepted. Yea, it is clear that the ministers of the gospel may sometimes work with their hands for their maintenance, either when the iniquity of the times wherein they live does not allow them what may be for their maintenance, or when the taking of it will hinder the propagation of the gospel, as is clear by the practice of the apostle Paul. So that that in which, with respect to this, thou art to follow Christ, O my soul, is, that thou do not needlessly involve thyself in worldly matters, to the hindrance of the duties of thy calling and station. As thou art a preacher of the gospel, other things must cede and give place to that. This is that which our Lord teaches us, Matth viii. 22 *Follow thou me; and let the dead bury their dead:* and the apostle, 2 Tim. ii 4. *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life.* Which was a thing not observed by some, especially our bishops, who acted as magistrates as well as ministers; a thing which our Lord absolutely refused; *Who made me a judge or a ruler?* says he; yet digested by them, being an infallible sign of their ignorance of the weight of that work. And in my opinion it is not observed either by some ministers now-a-days, who when they have their glebes and stipends sufficient for their maintenance, do notwithstanding take more land a-farming. For my part, I see not how such can be said not to entangle themselves with

with the affairs of this life, and go beyond what doth become them as ministers of the gospel. Neither of these are my temptation now being a probationer. But seeing I am unsettled, a corrupt heart and a subtle devil may take advantage of me, if I be not wary, and by their arguments from my present state may cast me off my feet, if I take not heed. Therefore, O my soul,

1. Beware of preaching smoothly upon the account of getting a call from any parish. Have a care, that the want of that, viz. a call, do not put thee upon men-pleasing. No, no; that must not be thy business. Remember, God provides for thee even now liberally, as he see's fit. Thou dost not want even so much of the world as is very necessary; and he that has provided for thee hitherto, yea, took thee, and kept thee from the womb will not forsake thee as long as thou dost not forsake him, but remainest faithful. Remember, God hath set the bounds of thy habitation, and determined the time. Though men and devils should oppose it, they shall not be able to hinder it. It is God himself that sets the solitary in families; and why shouldst thou go out of God's way to procure such a thing to thyself, or to antedate the time which is appointed of God; Go on in faithfulness, fear not; God can make, yea will make a man's enemies to be his friends, when his ways please the Lord. And though their corruptions disapprove of thy doctrine, and thyself for it, yet their consciences may be made to approve it, and God may bind them up, that they shall not appear against thee. Remember what J. B. thy known enemy, said, and how he carried, Diary. p. 143. See more to this purpose before, in the comparison of spiritual and carnal wisdom, p. 24—27. And what though thou shouldst never be settled in any charge at all? Christ and his apostles were itinerants. If the Lord see it fit, why shouldst thou say against it? If the Lord have something to do with thee in diverse

diverſe corners of his vineyard, calling thee ſometimes to one place, ſometimes to another, thou art not to quarrel that. Perhaps thou mayeſt do more good that way than otherwiſe. If thou hadſt been ſettled at home, then ſome ſouls here, which perhaps have got good of thy preaching, would have been deprived of it at leaſt as from thee; and God will always give thee meat as long as he gives thee work; and go were thou wilt, thou canſt not go out of thy Father's ground. Further, if thou ſhouldſt take that way, and tranſgreſs for a piece of bread, thou mayſt come ſhort of thy expectation for all that, and loſe both the world and a good conſcience. But ſuppoſe thou ſhouldſt by that means gain a call and a good ſtipend, thou loſeſt a good conſcience, which is a continual feaſt. For how can ſuch a practice be excuſed from ſimony, ſeeing it is *munus a lingua;* and it is a certain ſymptom that a preacher ſeeks not them, but theirs; and ſo thou getteſt it, and the curſe of God with it. No; Lord, in thy ſtrength, I reſolve never to buy eaſe and wealth at ſuch a dear rate.

2. Beware that thou cloſe with no call upon the account of ſtipend. Lay that by when thou conſidereſt the matter. See what clearneſs thou canſt get from the Lord, when any call may be given thee, and walk according to his mind, and the mind of the church. Wo is me if a ſtipend ſhould be that which would engage me to a place. I would ſhow myſelf a wretched creature. Conſider matters then abſtracting from that. For ſurely,

(1.) This is direct ſimony; ſelling the gift of God for money. Let their money periſh with themſelves, that will adventure to do ſo. Such are buyers and ſellers, that God will put out of his temple. Such are mere hirelings, working for wages; and too much of Balaam's temper is to be found there.

(2.) That will provoke God to curſe your bleſſings, and to ſend a moth among that which thou mayſt get; and it ſurely will provoke God to ſend leanneſs to thy

ſoul, as he did with the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, when he gave them what they were ſeeking.

(3.) Thou canſt not expect God's bleſſing on thy labours, but rather that thou ſhouldſt be a plague to a people whom you ſo join with. In a word, thou wouldſt go in the wrong way, and be diſcountenanced of God, when you have undertaken the charge.

There is yet a third caſe wherein this contempt or ſlighting of the world ſhould appear in one ſent to preach the goſpel; that is, when a man is ſettled, and has encouragement or ſtipend coming in to him, and ſo muſt needs have worldly buſineſs done, eſpecially if he be not ſingle, whereby he is involved in more trouble thereabouts, than any in my circumſtances for the time are. In ſuch a caſe a miniſter would endeavour to middle as little as he can with theſe things, but ſhun them as much as lies in him, eſpecially if he have any to whom he can well truſt the management of his affairs. For ſurely the making of bargains or purſuing them are not the fit object of a miniſter's employment. Not that I mean ſimply a man may not do that, and yet be a fiſher of men; but that many times the man that takes ſuch trouble in the things of the world to catch them, indiſpoſes himſelf for the art of man-fiſhing. But this not being my caſe, I paſs it, referring any rules in this caſe how to walk till the Lord be pleaſed ſo to tryſt me, if ever. Only do thou, O my ſoul, follow Chriſt in the contempt of the world. Do not regard it. Thou mayſt uſe it as a ſtaff in thine hand, but not as a burden on thy back, otherwiſe the care of ſouls will not be much in thy heart. And to help thee to this contempt of the world, conſider,

(1) The vanity of the world. Solomon knew well what it was to have abundance, yet he calls *all vanity of vanities, all is but vanity*. The world is a very empty thing, it cannot comfort the ſoul under diſtreſs. No; the body it can do no good to when ſore diſeaſes do afflict it. The world cannot profit a man in the day of wrath. When God ariſes to plead with

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a person, his riches avail nothing. When he lies down on a death-bed, they can give him no comfort, though all his coffers were full. When he stands before the tribunal of God, they profit him nothing. Why then should such an useless and vain thing be esteemed?

(2.) Consider that the love of the world where it predominates, is a sign of want of love to God: *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Yea, even in a gracious soul, in so far as the love of the world sways the heart, in so far doth the love of God decay. They are as the scales of the balance, as the one goes up, the other goes down.

(3.) Consider the uncertainty of worldly things. They are as a bird that takes the wings of the morning, and flees away. Set not thy heart then on that which is not. How many and various changes as to the outward state are in a man's life! The beggar may well say, *Hodie mihi, cras tibi.* Men sometimes vile are exalted, honourable men are depressed; and the world is indeed *volubilis rota;* that part which is now up, shall ere long be down. Seest thou not that there is no constancy to be observed in the world, save a *constant inconstancy?* All things go on in a constant course of vicissitude. Nebuchadnezzar in one hour is walking with an uplifted heart in his palace, saying, *Is not this great Babylon that I have built,* &c.? and the next driven from men, and made to eat grass as an ox. Herod in great pomp makes an oration, the people cry out, *It is the voice of a God, and not of a man,* and he is immediately eaten up of worms. The rich man to-day fares sumptuously on earth, and to-morrow cannot get a drop of water to cool his tongue.

(4.) Consider the danger that people are in by worldly things, when they have more than daily bread. The rich man in Luke xii. felt this to be a stumbling-block on which he broke his neck. The young man in the gospel, for love of what he had of the world,

parted with Christ, heaven and glory, and so made a sad exchange. Prosperity in the world is a dangerous thing; it is that which *destroys fools*, Prov i. 32. When Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked against God, and forgat the Lord that fed him, Deut xxxii. 15. It was better for David when he was on the one side of the hill, and his enemies on the other, and so in great danger, than when he was walking at ease on his house top, when he espied Bathsheba washing herself. And of this, O my soul, thou hast had the experience. Our Lord tells us, that it is very hard for a rich man to be saved; and teaches us, that it is hard to have riches, and not set the heart on them. What care and toil do men take to themselves to get them! what anxiety are they exercised with, and how do they torment themselves to keep them! and when they are got and kept, all is not *operæ pretium* to them. Many by riches and honour, &c. have lost their bodies, and more have lost their souls. It exposes men to be the object of others, as Naboth was even for his vineyard; and *who can stand before envy?* Prov. xxvii. 4. This ruined Naboth, 1 Kings xxi. *Da tholum Belisario, quem virtus extulit, invidia depressit.* So that he that handles the world, can very hardly come away with clean fingers. It is a snake in the bosom, that, if God prevent it not by his grace, may sting thy soul to death.

See 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

5. Remember the shortness and the uncertainty of thy time. Thou art a tenant at will, and knowest not how soon thou mayst remove; and thou canst carry nothing with thee. Therefore having food and raiment, (which the Lord does not let thee want), be therewith content, 1 Tim. vi. 7, 8. Thou art a stranger in this earth, going home to thy Father's house, where there will be no need of such things as the world affords. Why shouldst thou then, O my soul, desire any more than will carry thee to thy journey's end? Art thou going to set up thy tent on this

side

side Jordan to dwell here? Art thou saying, It is good for me to be here? Art thou so well entertained abroad, that thou desirest not to go home? No, no. Well then, O my soul, gird up the loins of thy mind. Thou art making homeward, and thy Father bids thee run and make haste: go then, and take no burden on thy back; lest it make thee sit up by the way, and the doors be shut ere thou reacheſt home, and so thou lie without through the long night of eternity.

And to shut up all, remember that there are other things for thee to set thy affections on than the things of this world. There are things above that merit thy affections. Where is Christ, heaven and glory, when thou lookeſt upon the world, highly esteeming it? Seeſt thou no beauty in him to ravish thy heart? Surely the more thou seeſt in him, the less thou wilt see in the world. And hath not experience confirmed this to thee? Alas, when the *beauty* of the upper house is in my offer, that ever I should have any kindness for the world, that vile dwarf and monster, that shall at the last be seen by me all in a fire. *Sursum cor*, O my soul! thou lookeſt too low. Behold the King in his glory; look to him that died for thee, to save thee from this present evil world. See him sitting at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. Behold the crown in his hand to give thee, when thou hast overcome the world. Behold the recompense of reward bought to thee with his precious blood, if thou overcome. Ah! art thou looking after toys, and going off thy way to gather the stones of the brook, when thou art running for a crown of gold, yea more than the fineſt gold? Does this become a man in his right wits? Yea, does it not rather argue madness, and a more than brutish stupidity? The brutes look down, but men are to look up. They have a soul capable of higher things than what the world affords: therefore,

*Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram,*

*Os homini sublime dedit, cælumque tueri*
*Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.*

Be then of a more noble spirit than the earth-worms. Let the swine feed on husks. Be thou of a more sublime spirit: trample on those things that are below. Art thou clothed with the sun? get the moon under thy feet then; despise it, look not on it with love, turn from it, and pass away. Let it not move thee if thou be poor, Christ had not where to lay his head. Let not the prospect of future troublesome times make thee solicitous how to be carried through; for "thou shalt "not be ashamed in the evil days, and in the days of "famine thou shalt be satisfied." God hath said it, Psal. xxxvii. 19. therefore do thou believe it. Be not anxious about thy provision for old age, for by all appearance thou wilt never see it. It is more than probable thou wilt be sooner at thy journey's end. Thy body is weak; it is even stepping down to salute corruption as its mother, ere it has well entered the hall of the world: thy tabernacle pins seem to be drawing out by little and little already. Courage then, O my soul: ere long the devil, and the world, and the flesh shall be bruised under thy feet; and thou shalt be received into eternal mansions. But though the Lord should lengthen out thy days to old age, he that brought thee out of thy mother's belly, will not forsake thee then either. If he give thee life, he will give thee meat. Keep a loose hold of the world then; contemn it if thou wouldst be a fisher of men.

*Secondly*, Christ was useful to souls in his private converse, taking occasion to instruct, rebuke, &c. from such things as offered. Thus he dealt with the woman of Samaria; he took occasion from the water she was drawing, to tell her of the living water, &c. Thus being at a feast, he rebuked the Pharisees that chuse the uppermost seats, and instructed them in the right way of behaviour at feasts. O my soul, follow Christ in this. Be edifying in thy private converse.

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When thou art at any time in company, let something that smells of heaven drop from thy lips. Where any are faulty, reprove them as prudently as thou canst; where they appear ignorant, instruct them when need requires, *&c.* And learn that heavenly chymistry of extracting some spiritual thing out of earthly things. To this purpose and for this end endeavour after a heavenly frame, which will, as is storied of the philosopher's stone, turn every metal into gold. When the soul is heavenly, it will even scrape jewels out of a dunghill; whatever the discourse be, it will afford some one useful thing or another. Alas! my soul, that thou dost follow this example so little. O what a shame is it for thee to sit down in company, and rise again, and part with them, and never a word of Christ to be heard where thou art? Be ashamed of this, and remember what Christ says, Matth. x. 32, 33. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess "also before my Father,——but whosoever shall deny "me before men, him will I also deny before my "Father, which is in heaven." How many times hast thou been somewhat exact in thy conversation when alone; but when in company, by the neglect of this duty, especially of rebuking, thou hast come away with loss and a troubled mind, because of thy faint-heartedness this way. Amend in this, and make thy converse more edifying, and take courage to reprove, exhort, *&c.* Thou knowest not what a seasonable admonition may do; the Lord may be pleased to back it with life and power.

*Eighthly*, Christ laid hold upon opportunities of public preaching when they offered, as is clear from the whole history of the gospel. He gave a pattern to ministers to be instant in season and out of season. O my soul, follow Christ in this: refuse not any occasion of preaching, when God calls thee to it. It is very unlike Christ's practice for preachers of the gospel to be lazy, and slight the opportunities of doing good to

to a people, when the Lord puts opportunities in their hand. For this end consider,

1. Besides Christ's example, that thou art nothing worth in the world, in so far as thou art lazy. What for serve we, if we are not serviceable for God?

2. It may provoke God to take away thy talent and give it to another, if thou be not active. Whatever talent the Lord hath given thee, it must be employed in his service. He gave it not thee to hide it in a napkin. Remember what became of the unprofitable servant that hid his Lord's money.

3. Thou knowest not when thy Master shall come. And blessed is that servant whom when his Lord shall come, he shall find so doing. If Christ should come and find thee idle, when he is calling thee to work, how wilt thou be able to look him in the face? They are well that die at Christ's work. * * * * *

*End of the* SOLILOQUY.

THE

# Distinguishing Characters

OF

# TRUE BELIEVERS.

## I. In relation to God in Christ, as their Refuge and Portion.

PSALM cxlii. 5.

*I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion, in the land of the living* *.

THAT is a pertinent question to put to each of you, which was proposed to Elijah in the cave, *What dost thou here, Elijah?* 1 Kings xix 9. Sure I am, you have weighty business to do here, whether you lay it to heart or not. Ye are in this world as in a weary land, a wilderness, a place of great danger, and of great wants: and if you have felt it so, ye are come with a design to seek a refuge, where ye may be in safety; and a portion for your souls, whence your wants may be supplied. Our text discovers where ye may find both: *I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living.*

These words shew us the course David took for relief in most straitening circumstances. He was hiding himself in a cave, that of Adullam or Engedi, for

* The first sermon on this text was preached at Ettrick, August 19. 1722, immediately before the administration of the Lord's supper.

for fear of Saul, by whom he was in hazard of his life. His spirit was like to sink under the burden of perplexing fears and griefs; he was in the utmost perplexity, ver. 3. *My spirit was overwhelmed within me*, says he. He was deserted by all, and as an outcast that no body cared for, ver. 4. *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.* In this case he betakes himself to the Lord by prayer. And here,

1. We may notice his praying in that case, *I cried unto thee, O Lord.* Tho' his case was extremely heavy, yet it did not render him incapable of praying, but quickened him to that delightful exercise, and caused him to cry to heaven out of the belly of the earth. Fears, sorrows, and perplexities on any account whatsoever, are gone too far, when they restrain prayer to the Lord: yet it may be the case of a saint, as of Asaph when he said, *I am so troubled that I cannot speak*, Psal. lxxvii. 4. Such would do well to hearken to that word, Cant. ii. 14. *O my dove,—let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice: for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* The best ease for a heart full of trouble and grief, is to give it a vent into the bosom of a gracious God, as appears from the title of Psal. cii. *A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.* Hannah found it so in her comfortable experience, 1 Sam. i 18 who having *poured out her soul before the Lord, went her way, and her countenance was no more sad.*

2. His faith in prayer, *I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion.* He said it not only with the mouth, but also and chiefly in and with his heart (as the word is often used.) His heart and soul said it, upon the discovery of the Lord's holding forth himself in his word, the ground of faith, for a refuge and portion to the sons of men. And here three things are to be observed.

1*st*, Faith's

1*ſt*, Faith's diſcerning the Lord Jehovah's fulneſs for and ſuitableneſs to the ſoul's caſe: and this muſt be by the perſpective of the word, illuminated by the Spirit. The pſalmiſt ſaw the Lord by faith, perfectly ſuited to his caſe, in the ſeveral exigencies thereof.

(1.) He was compaſſed about with evils threatening to ſwallow him up, and in all the creation he could find no place to flee to where he might be ſafe: *Refuge failed me*, ſays he, or, *A place to flee to is periſhed from me*. But by faith he diſcerns a refuge above him, though there was none in all the world. Above me thou art a refuge; and if I can get there, I would be ſafe.

(2) He was under many wants, and there was none to ſupply them. Though he could have got a place to flee to in the earth, where he might have been ſafe; yet how could he live in it? for no man cared for his ſoul or life, ver. 4. But faith diſcerns Jehovah to be a portion, that one may live on, when the world will afford him nothing. Thou art a portion; and if I can get that, I will have enough.

2*dly*, Faith's diſcerning the ſoul's liberty of acceſs to the Lord as a refuge and a portion. This alſo muſt be by the perſpective of the word, illuminated by the Spirit. The goſpel-offer caſts open the door of the refuge, and proclaims the portion to be free to every man that will take it, Rev xxii. 17. which general offer is equivalent to a particular one; as if the Lord ſhould ſay, The refuge is open for you and you, every one of you, ſo that you may flee to it without fear; and the portion is free for you and you, and every one of you, and you may take and uſe it as your own, without fear of vitious intromiſſion. Hence our Lord ſays, *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved*, Mark xvi. 16.; and the apoſtle, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved*, Acts xvi. 31. And this offer the Spirit of the Lord carries home on the ſoul, that the man believes the offer is to him in particular, the refuge is open to him, the portion

tion free to him, according to the word, 1 John v. 11. *This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life.*

3*dly*, Faith's appropriating of the Lord as a refuge and portion to itself, *Thou art my refuge, and my portion.* The Lord speaks by his Spirit in his word, and says to the soul. "I am a safe refuge and a "full portion, and I am willing and offer myself "freely to be thy refuge and thy portion." The soul believes God, and says, "Then, Lord, thou art "my refuge and my portion; even so I take thee." And thus the bargain is closed, and the soul takes possession of the refuge and portion which was offered This is that direct acting of faith, in the cave, which the psalmist reflects upon with pleasure afterwards. I said it then.

And it shines bright in sincerity as faith unfeigned. "Away with all other refuges, as refuges of lies. Lord, "I take thee for my refuge, and thou art my refuge, "where I shall be in safety, as desperate as my case ap- "pears to be. And I take thee not only as my re- "fuge, but my portion; and my portion from this "moment, as well as my refuge. I design not to take "the crown of Israel for my portion on earth, and "thee for my portion in heaven, when that is gone "from me; but thou art my portion now even in the "land of the living, for my heart to live upon while "in this world, as well as in the next."

As this text affords a large field of discourse, I shall only at present take notice of one doctrine from it, *viz.*

DOCT *The soul that would have safety and satisfaction, must take the Lord Jehovah for a refuge and portion to itself, saying, whatever others say, that he is its refuge and portion.*

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall a little at present consider the nature of this refuge and portion. And here I will offer a few things,

1. Con-

1 Concerning the refuge.

2. Concerning the portion.

FIRST, Concerning the refuge, I offer the following particulars

1. The Lord Christ, or God in Christ, is the refuge itself: Is. iv. 6. *There shall be a tabernacle —for a place of refuge. The Branch of the Lord,* ver. 2. *viz. the Man whose name is the Branch,* Zech. iii. 8 and vi. 12. is *the tabernacle* here spoke of. which is *for a place of refuge,* as appears by comparing John i. 14 *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt (Gr. tabernacled) among us;* and Is. xxxii. 2. *A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest,—— as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.* A man, who is also JEHOVAH. THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, Jer. xxiii. 6. None less than a God, the eternal God, is or could be a sufficient refuge for guilty creatures; no arms less strong than the everlasting arms could bear the weight, Deut. xxxiii. 27 Yet sinners could never have taken refuge in an absolute God, more than dry stubble could be safe in a consuming fire, Heb. xii. *ult. For our God is a consuming fire.* Wherefore, that God might be a refuge for sinners, he put himself in our nature, he took upon him our flesh. The fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Christ, Col ii. 9 Thus he became our refuge, which we might safely flee to. But a God out of Christ no sinful creature can deal with to its salvation, but to its certain destruction. For thus saith Jehovah himself, Is xxvii. 4 5. *Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.* None that know God will dare to approach him out of Christ.

2. This refuge is by a legal destination a refuge for lost mankind, for sinners of Adam's race: 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto*

*himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* John iii. 14, 15, 16. *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* This destination gives men a right to flee thither for safety, which sinners of the angelic tribe have not; for as to sinners there is a man-love, though no angel-love, called *the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man*, Tit. iii. 4. Hence the call to the refuge is directed to men, Prov. viii. 4. *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men;* and to the people, Psal. lxii. 8. *Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him.* And this call is their warrant, *God is a refuge for us*, ibid. Wherefore, be what ye will, if ye be men or women, if of the lost family of Adam, stand not disputing whether ye may enter this refuge, and take possession of it for yourselves or not: you warrant to enter it is clear, and your safety upon your entering it infallibly sure.

God knows who are his, and for whom the High Priest died, and for whom the refuge was designed in the eternal decree of election. These are secrets, on the knowledge of which your warrant to enter the refuge does not depend. You must first enter, upon the warrant of the legal destination of the refuge registered in the word, whereby it is appointed for sinful men; and then ye will know what concerns you in these secrets. Remember, the cities of refuge were appointed not for Israel only, but for the stranger and sojourner among them, Numb. xxxv 15. If a stranger and a sojourner would not believe that he might have access to the cities of refuge, because he was not an Israelite, and therefore would flee for refuge to his own country, no wonder he fell by the hand of the avenger of blood.

More

More particularly, I will tell you of four sorts of men, whom God in Christ is a refuge for; and I am sure each of us may find our name among them. He is a refuge,

(1.) For the oppressed: Psal. ix. 9. *God will be a refuge for the oppressed.* Are ye oppressed by sin? Do ye find it holding you down as a giant doth a weak man, so that your souls are saying, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. vii. 24. Are ye oppressed by Satan? Do ye find the strong and subtle adversary an overmatch for you? Are ye oppressed by the world? by the men of the world, in your goods, in your name and reputation, or on any other account are you crying out of violence and wrong? are ye oppressed by the things of the world, the cares, business, or frowns of the world? Here is a refuge for you; come in hither unto a God in Christ, saying, *O Lord, thou art my refuge:* and, *O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.* Isa. xxxviii. 14. And there is a promise for your safety, Psal. lxxii. 4. *He shall break in pieces the oppressor.* This promise is branched out to your several cases; — As to the oppression by sin, Micah vii. 19. *He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.* — As to Satan, Rom. xvi. 20. *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* — And as to the world, John xvi. ult. *In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

(2.) For outcasts, Psal. cxlii. 4, 5. the text and context. Are there any among us to whom the world's face is quite changed, and the brooks of comfort in it are dried up, and they are so tossed, chased, and harassed in it, that they have forgotten their resting-place? are any of you *become a stranger unto your brethren and an alien unto your mother's children?* Psal. lxix. 8. Is it grown such a strange world, that even "your own familiar friend, in whom you trusted, "which did eat of your bread, hath lifted up his heel

" againſt you?" Pſal. xli. 9. and that where-ever ye turn yourſelves in it, to find reſt and refuge, the door is caſt on your face? Here is a refuge for you; here is one open door; come in thou bleſſed of the Lord: Pſal cxlvii. 2. *The Lord gathereth the outcaſts of Iſrael.* It ſeems the Lord minds to have you in? he is doing with you as a father with a ſtubborn ſon run away from out of his father's houſe, thinking to ſhift for himſelf among his friends, and not come back: the father ſends peremptory word through them all, ſaying, " In whoſe-ſoever houſe of yours my ſon is ſkulking, " preſently turn him out of doors, and let none of " you take him in; and if he come in, give him not " one night's lodging, nay, let him not heat in your " houſe." Wherefore is all this, but juſt to get him back again to his father's houſe?

(3) For debtors, broken men, unable to pay their debts, Iſ. xxv. 4. " Thou haſt been a ſtrength to the " poor, a ſtrength to the needy in his diſtreſs, a refuge " from the ſtorm." Herein David was a type of Chriſt; for " every one that was in diſtreſs, and every one " that was in debt, gathered themſelves unto him," 1 Sam xxii. 2. All Adam's family is drowned in debt. Our father Adam made a bond, wherein he bound himſelf and his heirs to perfect obedience to the law, as the condition of life to him and all his, and that under the penalty of death in its utmoſt extent. This bond is the covenant of works. And when he ſubſcribed it, he had enough to pay the round ſum, and ſo to ſecure heaven and glory for him and his. But alas! by his own miſmanagement he broke, and could never more pay it: ſo the bond lies upon the head of all his heirs, till getting into the refuge, they are diſcharged of it upon their pleading the Cautioner's payment, Rom. vi. 14. *Ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Whence it is evident, that thoſe who are under grace in this refuge, are not any more under the law, or under that bond, and that they who are not in the refuge, under grace, are

ſtill

ſtill under the bond, the law as the covenant of works. And know, O ſinner, that thou art liable in payment both of the penalty and principal ſum contained in the bond: "For it is written, Curſed is every one that "continueth not in all things which are written in the "book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. And either of theſe are farther out of your reach to pay, than the buying of the richeſt inheritance in the world is out of the reach of a beggar in rags. And though perhaps ye know it not, there is a caption out againſt you, and ye know not what moment ye may be laid up in priſon upon it, from whence ye can never come forth, Matth. v. 25, 26. But here is a refuge for you, into which as ſoon as ye enter, your debt is paid. Rom. vii. 4. "Ye "are become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt."

(4.) For criminals liable to death by the law, Heb. vi. 18. Sinners, ye have by your crimes againſt the King of heaven, forfeited your life, and laid yourſelves open to the ſtroke of juſtice: the avenger of blood is at your heels; and if you be ſeized by juſtice, and fall into the hands of an abſolute God, you periſh for ever. But here is a refuge for you, which will afford a reſt to your weary ſouls, Matth. xi. 28. a hiding place, where ye ſhall be ſafe, Iſa. xxxii. 2.

3. The gate of this refuge, through which ſinners enter, is the vail of the fleſh of Chriſt, rent, torn, and opened to let in the guilty creature unto JEHOVAH as a refuge, Heb x. 19, 20. It is only by a crucified Chriſt the ſinner can come unto God comfortably, John x. 9. The ſinner fleeing for refuge, muſt fix his eyes in the firſt place on the wounds of our glorious Redeemer, and come by the altar unto the ſanctuary, Rom. iii. 25. When Jacob had ſeen the ladder ſet on the earth, whoſe top reached heaven, repreſenting Chriſt not only as God, but as man deſcending into the lower parts of the earth by his death and burial, he ſaith, "This is none other but the houſe "of God, and this is the gate of heaven," Gen. xxviii.

17. Without such a costly gate sinners had never had access to God as a refuge.

4. The covert in this refuge is the righteousness of Christ. Hence Christ is called, "The Lord our righteousness," Jer xxiii. 6.; and the apostle glories in that righteousness "which is through the faith of Christ, "the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. The sinner getting in under this covert is safe from the reach of revenging justice, the curse of the law, and the hurt of any thing, Luke x 19. Isa. xxvii 3. This covert, which is ever over the head of the sinner from the moment he enters the refuge, consists of three plies.

(1) The satisfaction of Christ's death and sufferings, 1 John ii. 2. *He is the propitiation for our sins.* Thus they are under the covert of the Mediator's blood, through which no revenging wrath can make its way. Cant. iii 10. with Rom viii. 1. This is imputed to the believer, who is reckoned to have suffered in Christ, even as he sinned in Adam. Hence the apostle says, *I am crucified with Christ*, Gal. ii. 20.

(2.) The righteousness of Christ's life and conversation, who obeyed the commands of the law as a public person, as well as he suffered the penalty of it in that capacity. Rom. v. 19 "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience "of one shall many be made righteous." So that his obedience is theirs too, and all the good works that he did, for the space of thirty-three years that he lived in the world: the believer has them all in order, to found his plea for heaven upon. Rom. viii. 4. *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.*

(3) The holiness of his birth and nature, Heb vii. 26. "For such an High Priest became us, who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners." This also is theirs and upon them: John xvii. 19. "For "their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be "sanctified through the truth." Not as it were imputed

ed to them in the point of gospel sanctification, as Antinomians say; but in point of justification, as a part of the law-demand of righteousness for life; which law requires for that end, not only satisfaction for sin, but also good works, and not only good works, but a good and holy nature, having no bias to evil Exod xx 17. all of them perfect in their kind. And as Christ's satisfaction for sin is the only solid plea against the first, and the righteousness of his life the only solid plea against the second; so the holiness of his birth and nature, is the only solid plea against the last: Rom iv. 5, 8. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that "justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righte-"ousness.—Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will "not impute sin" Hence Christ says of the spouse, *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee,* Cant. iv. 7

5 The several apartments in this refuge for the various cases of the refugees, are all the attributes and perfections of God the Lord JEHOVAH, Prov. xviii 10. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" And hence the sinner's refuge is said to be *in God*, Psal. lxii. 7. Every thing in God is a refuge to the man who is once under the covert. Is he in perplexing difficulties that he knows not how to be rid of? let him flee into the room or chamber of the divine wisdom. Is he under any thing quite above his ability? let him flee into the chamber of the divine power. Is he under guilt? let him flee into the chamber of divine mercy. Does the law bend up a process against him for debt already paid by his Cautioner, take him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest, or I will cast thee into the prison of hell? let him flee into the chamber of divine justice, 1 John i. 9. *He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.* And so in other cases.

6. The boundaries of the refuge are the everlasting covenant, Psal. xlvi. 7. *The God of Jacob is our refuge.* It is God's covenant title. The borders of the

the cities of refuge were to be nicely marked: for upon the outside of the line was death to the criminal, on the inside life, for death could not come over the line Numb. xxxv. 26. 27 Sinners without the covenant there is no refuge for you; but come within, and none can touch you there.

7 Lastly, The sinner's entering into the refuge is by faith, as in the next, *I said, Thou art my refuge* Of which more afterwards.

SECONDLY, Concerning the portion, I offer only two things.

1. The same God in Christ who is the refuge for poor sinners, is also the portion for them to live on: *Thou art my portion in the land of the living.* They are but silly refuges that men can find in the world; they may be starved out of them, and forced by want to abandon them. But God in Christ is a refuge for us: and he is a portion in the refuge; and those who take refuge in him, need never go abroad without the border of their refuge to bring in provision for themselves.

2. God in Christ is what one may live on, Psal xvi. 5, 6. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." The men of the world cannot understand this: but the experience of the saints in glory puts it beyond question; and so does the experience of the saints on earth: witness David, Psal lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none "upon earth that I desire besides thee:" and Habakkuk, chap iii. 17. 18 "Although the fig-tree shall "not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; "the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall "yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, "and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will "rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." One may live upon that happily, which is commensurable to all his desires, for the perfecting of his

his nature, and maintaining it in its perfection. And this, no creature can be to a man, but God is and will be to all who take him for their portion.

In him the man has a dwelling place, Pſal. xc. 1. raiment, Rev. iii. 18. meat and drink. John vi. 55. and all in a word. Phil. iv. 18. 2 Cor vi. 10. And hereto belongs the ſanctification of the ſoul, in the beginning, progreſs, and conſummation of it. as that which is for the perfecting of the ſoul, 1 Cor. i. 30. So that as ſure as the ſoul is made ſafe in Chriſt, it is ſanctified in Chriſt, Iſa xlv. 24 "Surely, ſhall one "ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength."

I ſhall now make ſome practical improvement of this ſubject; which I ſhall diſcuſs briefly in a twofold uſe.

Use I. of trial. Hereby ye may know whether ye be believers or not, and will be welcome gueſts at the Lord's table.

1. What is your refuge? where take ye ſhelter, or what is your refuge from avenging juſtice, the curſe of the law, and the wrath of God for your ſins? If ye flee for refuge to your own working, doing, and ſuffering, your repentance and reformation, your caſe is bad. But is the covert of Chriſt's righteouſneſs your only refuge, and, renouncing all other pleas, do you hold by that? then God is your refuge, Pſal. lxii. 6. Do ye make him your refuge, and flee to him, when purſued by ſin, Satan, and an evil world? Alas! moſt men either ſeek no refuge from ſin, or they make themſelves, their own ſtrength, wiſdom, or reſolution, their refuge. But the believer makes God his refuge for all.

2. What is your portion? Many pretend to make God their refuge, but the world and their luſts are their hearts choice for a portion. But the believer takes God in Chriſt for a refuge and portion too, not only for a defence from evil, but for a treaſure of proviſion to live upon even in the world. The world's good

good things they may take for comforts, but God alone for the portion of their souls. And therefore whatever fondness they may sometimes fall into, through temptation, for other things, they will shew God is their portion in the case of competition. Like the child, who may be fond of others that caresses it, yet prefers its mother to all others.

Use II. I exhort you to take God in Christ this day for your refuge and portion.

*First*, O flee into this refuge. For motives, consider,

1. Ye need a refuge: for your souls are in the greatest hazard; the avenger of blood is pursuing you: and ye are in an evil world, and judgement is fast approaching on the land wherein ye live. It is high time for you to look out for a place of safety.

2. There is no other safe refuge for you. Have ye not already found other refuges, where ye expected safety, fail you? and so will ye find it unto the end. Death will cast you out of them all. But if ye flee by faith into this refuge, it will never fail nor disappoint you.

3. This refuge is open to you. God in Christ is ready to embrace you with open arms, and afford you all manner of safety, from revenging justice, the fiery law, hell, wrath, an evil world, and sin, the worst of all enemies.

*Secondly*, Take God in Christ for your portion this day. For motives, consider,

1. The Lord is willing to take you for his portion. When all the world is divided into two parts, such as will believe in Christ, and such as will not; though the latter may be great and wise men in comparison of you, and ye never so little worth, he says, They shall be my portion, Deut. xxxii. 9. *For the Lord's portion is his people:* and will not you say, *Thou art my portion?*

2. There is no shadow of just competition betwixt the Lord and all other portions. Ye will get the double portion, as first-born, by taking him for your

your portion. He is a full, complete, satisfying portion, and a lasting portion that will never decay. Now the all is divided into two parts, God himself, and the world with all that is in it: chuse you this day which shall be your portion. And remember that upon this choice your everlasting happiness or misery depends.

But one may say, How shall I take the Lord for my refuge and my portion? how shall I say, *Thou art my refuge, and my portion?*

1. Be sensible of thy need of a refuge and a portion to thy soul which it cannot find among the creatures, as the prodigal deeply felt, Luke xv. 14. Till the vanity of created refuges and portions be discovered, and they appear refuges of lies, the soul will never take God in Christ for its refuge and portion, Jer xvi 19 "O "Lord, my strength and my fortress, and my refuge "in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto "thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things "wherein there is no profit."

2. Believe God in Christ to be a safe refuge and a full portion. The soul will never come to Christ, till it be persuaded that that safety and satisfaction is to be found in him, which is to be found no-where else, Luke xv. 17.

3 Believe the gospel-offer with particular application to thyself, namely, That the Lord is offered for a refuge and portion to thee. This is the report of the gospel; and he who does not believe it, makes God a liar, 1 John v. 10.

4. Form a stedfast resolution of spirit to take God in Christ for thy refuge and portion, to venture to flee into the refuge, and lay hold on him as thy portion, upon the warrant of the gospel-offer, as the prodigal did, *I will arise, and go to my father*, &c. Luke xv. 18.

5 Renounce all other refuges and portions, and lay the whole streis of thy safety and provision, for time

time and eternity, upon God in Christ, saying, "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel, Jer. iii. 23. God is a refuge for us, Psal. lxii. 8." Bid farewel to the refuges of lies, lift thy confidence and dependance from off all others, and fix it upon God in Christ, upon the warrant of the word, saying as Psal. lxii. 5 "My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from him."

6. *Lastly*, Resolutely cleave to the Lord as thy refuge and portion, saying with Job, chap. xiii 15 *Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him:* Thou art my refuge and portion, I will seek no other, I can take no other, for time and for eternity.

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## Faith's Recognition of taking God for Refuge and Portion illustrated *.

PSALM cxlii. 5.

*I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion, in the land of the living.*

LAST Lord's day I opened the nature of the refuge for poor sinners, pressed you to flee into it, and to say each of you for yourselves, Thou art my refuge, and shewed how ye should say it. I now propose another doctrine, *viz.*

DOCT. *That those who have said to God in Christ, Thou art my refuge and portion, should recognise, reflect upon, and call to mind their so saying.* Or, *Those who*

* This second sermon was preached at Ettrick, August 26. 1722.

*who have taken God in Christ for their refuge and portion, should recognise their so doing. I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion* David said this in the cave, and afterwards he comes over it again.

In handling this doctrine, I shall proceed as follows.

I. I shall shew what is imported in this recognisance of that deed or say of the soul

II. Why they should recognise it.

III. Apply.

I. I am to shew what is imported in this recognisance of that deed or say of the soul: *I said it.* It imports,

1. A remembrance of the solemn transaction, Psal. ciii. 18. This is a deed never to be forgotten, but always to be kept in remembrance. It was God's quarrel with Tyre, that they remembered not the brotherly covenant with Edom, Amos i 9 How much more if we remember not the covenant with God himself? But it fares with many in effect, as with men in other cases, they say the word, but afterwards they never mind they said it: for alas! they *remember it as waters that pass away*, which is in effect, it slips out of their mind, Job vi. 16. But, O ye who have said this, remember,

(1.) What you said. You said that God in Christ should be your refuge, that under the shade of his wings you hid yourselves, and that, renouncing all other refuges, as refuges of lies, you did betake yourselves to the covert of Christ's righteousness, and that there ye would abide for your portion: which was a formal acceptance of and laying hold on the covenant.

(2.) To whom you said it. To God in Christ speaking to you in the gospel-offer, and inviting you into the refuge. What men say to their superiors, they think

themselves specially concerned to mind. And surely what ye have said to God, ye ought in a peculiar manner to remember, and awe your hearts with the consideration of the majesty of the party to whom ye said it. Psal. xvi. 2. "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord "Thou art my Lord." For he is not one with whom we may play fast and loose

(3.) How ye said it. Did ye not say it in your hearts, while God in Christ was held out as a refuge for you? And the language of the heart is plain language with a heart-searching God. Did not some of you say it with you mouths? and did not all communicants say it solemnly before the world, angels, and men, by their receiving the elements of bread and wine?

(4.) Upon what grounds you said it. Did you not see a necessity of a refuge for you, and a necessity of taking God in Christ for your refuge? Ye had rational grounds for it, and lasting grounds that can never fail; so that ye can never have ground to retract, nor shift about for another refuge, Jer. ii 31.

(5.) Where ye said it. Remember the spot of ground, where ye said it in prayer, where ye said it at the communion-table, Psal. xlii. 6. The stones of the place will be witnesses of your saying it, Joshua xxiv. 27.

2. A standing to it, without regretting that we said it, remembering what is said John vi. 66, 67, 68, 69. "From that time many of his disciples went "back, and walked no more with him. Then said Je- "sus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then "Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we "go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we be- "lieve, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son "of the living God." Men often repent what they have said, and therefore will not own they said it. But gracious souls will not repent their saying this, but will abide by it. If they were to make their choice a thousand times, having chosen God in Christ for their refuge and

and portion, they would not alter, but their firſt choice would be their laſt choice, Jer. iii. 19. "I ſaid, "Thou ſhall call me. My Father, and ſhalt not turn "away from me." Many alterations may be in mens circumſtances in the world, but there can never be one that will afford ground for their going back of this their ſaying.

3. An owning of the obligation of it. *I ſaid*, and am obliged thereby to ſtand to it: *For I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back*, Judg. xi. 35. God in Chriſt is yours, and ye are his by your own conſent; ye are no more your own; ye have ſaid the word, and muſt own that it is binding on you; and ye muſt beware that after vows ye make not inquiry. Whoever may pretend they have their choice yet to make of a refuge and portion to themſelves, ye cannot: ye are engaged already, and ye are not in ſafety to hearken to any other propoſals more than a woman who has already ſigned her contract with one man.

4. A profeſſing of it confidently without being aſhamed of it: *q. d.* "I own it before all men, and "am not aſhamed of my choice." Antichriſt allows ſome of his vaſſals to carry his mark in their right hand, Rev. xiii. 16. But all the followers of the Lamb have their mark on their forehead, where it will not hide, Rev. xiv. 1. The world would put the people of God to ſhame on the head of their refuge and portion, as if they had made a foliſh bargain of it, Pſal. xiv 6. "You have ſhamed the counſel of the poor, becauſe "the Lord is his refuge." But ſincerity will make men deſpiſe that ſhame, as David ſaid, "And I will "yet be more vile than thus, and will be baſe in mine "own ſight."

5. A ſatisfaction of heart in it: *q. d.* "I ſaid it, "and O but I am well pleaſed that ever I ſaid it; it "was the beſt ſaying I could ever ſay," Pſal. xvi. 2, 5 6, 7. And this is in effect to ſay it over again. And good reaſon there is for them who have ſincerely ſaid

it, to be well satisfied in their refuge, and to rejoice in their portion. The reflecting upon it may afford solid delight and content of heart. Ye who have taken the Lord for your refuge, may with much satisfaction reflect on it; for ye have,

(1.) A safe refuge, Prov. xviii. 10. "The name of "the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth "into it, and is safe. Chap. xxix. 25. Whoso putteth "his trust in the Lord, shall be safe." Ye may sing the 91st psalm as your own charter for safety. Whatever storms blow, no plague shall come near thy dwelling while thou dwellest there. Revenging justice can do nothing against you there: the fiery law cannot throw the fire-balls of its curses within the border of your refuge: Rom. viii. 1. "There is now no con-"demnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Gal. "iii. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of "of the law, being made a curse for us." God, who without the refuge is a consuming fire to sinners, within it is a refreshing, warming, enlightening fire to them. However heavy days of common calamity ye may see, ye may be very easy in your refuge, having such a covert above your head, Job v. 22. *At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh*, like the child in the shipwreck, smiling at the motions of the broken board.

(2.) A well furnished refuge: *Thou art my refuge and my portion*, says David in the text. There will never be any need to leave it, for want of provision, and to shift elsewhere. God in Christ is a full portion in the refuge, of which we may afterwards speak more particularly. There is nothing the man wants and is really in need of, but he shall have it there, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: "the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing "will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly. What is in the refuge? There is a fulness there, yea all fulness, Col. i. 19 *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.* And where all fulness is, [1.] There is not any thing wanting to make the

the sinner happy; there is a variety of provision, yea, all manner of provision, Cant. vii. *ult.* "At our gates "are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old. Rev. "xxi. 7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things." [2.] There is plenty of every thing; no exhausting of any part of the provision; nothing will ever run short there, Rev. xxii. 2 "In the midst of the street of it, "and of either side of the river, was there the tree "of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and "yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of "the tree were for the healing of the nations."

(3.) The only refuge where men can be safe, Psal. xviii. 31. *For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?* There are other refuges indeed, but then they are all refuges of lies, and they will be all swept away, and those who lodge in them left naked, and open to all ruin, Isa. xxviii. 17. "The hail shall "sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall "overflow the hiding-place." All must come to your refuge or perish, Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there salva-"tion in any other: for there is none other name un-"der heaven given among men whereby we must be "saved." So that your duty and interest both say to you in this case, Let them return unto you, but return not ye unto them.

(4.) A near-hand refuge, Jer. xxiii. 23. *Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?* God in Christ is every-where present; so be where ye will, ye are always within a step of your refuge, to be made by faith, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. "But the righteousness "which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in "thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, "to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall "descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ "from the dead); but what saith it? The word is "nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that "is the word of faith which we preach." Hence the people of God have had the benefit of their refuge when they were cast into prisons, dungeons, banished to re-

mote parts of the world. The cities of refuge were so situated, that some of them were on this side Jordan, and some on that side, that they might be near to flee to. In a moment thou mayst flee into thy refuge by faith. Hence faith is called a looking, Isa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.*

(5.) A refuge none can stop in your way to. However the child of God be blocked up, like David in the cave, however he be hampered, none in the world can stop his way thither: *I said, Thou art my refuge.* God himself has prepared the way; and there is no stop in it for any that mind for it. Hence Christ says to the spouse, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come a-"way. For lo, the winter is past; the rain is over "and gone, &c. Cant. ii. 10, 11." Enemies may stand betwixt you and all created refuges, but nothing can hold you out of this refuge, who by faith go thither. "For, says the apostle, I am persuaded, that neither "death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor "powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor "height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be "able to separate us from the love of God which is in "Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

(6.) A ready Refuge. The gates stand open night and day to receive the refugees, Zech xiii. 1. "In "that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house "of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for "sin and for uncleanness." None who flee thither are refused, or denied access; John vi. 37. *Him that that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* The father meets the prodigal son while he was yet a great way off; and no man can be more ready to enter the refuge, than the Refuge is to receive him.

(7.) A lasting refuge; a refuge for time, for all times, be they never so bad: Psal. lxii. 8. *Trust in him at all times:—God is a refuge for us.* From the beginning to this day, throughout all generations, this refuge has lasted, Psal xc. 1. and will last a refuge

fuge for sinners to the end. And it is a refuge for eternity too, when all other refuges shall be razed, Isa. xxv. 4. "Thou hast been a refuge to the poor a "strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from "the storm, &c. Heb vii. 25 Wherefore he is able "also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto "God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

6. A pleading the benefit of it: *q. d.* "I have said "it, and plead the benefit of God's refugees, safety "and satisfaction;" Lam. iii. 24. "The Lord is my "portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." God loves to have his people pleading their interest in him Jer iii 4. "Wilt thou not from this time cry "unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my "youth?" The saints are very pointed and peremptory in it, Psal. cxvi. 16. "Oh Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: "thou hast loosed my bonds." And this they do over the belly of discouragements, Isa lxiii. 16 "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant "of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, "art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting." We should hold by it, and by no means quit it, as the guilty did by the horns of the altar. Therefore saith the apostle, Heb. x. 35. "Cast not "away your confidence, which hath great recompense "of reward"

II. The next head is to shew why they who have taken God in Christ for their refuge and portion, should recognise their so doing. They should do it,

1. For the honour of God in Christ. It tends to the Lord's honour for his people to be often recognising and re-acknowledging their subjection to him, and their consent to the covenant, Jer. iii. 4 fore-cited. For it says, they remember it, stand to it, own it, profess it confidently, are satisfied in it, and plead the benefit of it For this cause the sacrament of the supper was instituted, and is often to be celebrated, that so the covenant

venant may be confirmed and recogniſed again and again.

2. To revive the impreſſions of it on their own ſouls, Pſal. xvi. 2. *O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.* We are apt to forget what we have moſt ſolemnly ſaid unto the Lord in the covenant. Hence Moſes ſays unto the Children of Iſrael, Deut. iv 23. *Take heed unto yourſelves, leſt ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God which he made with you.* How ſoon did Peter and the reſt of the diſciples forget after the firſt communion what they had ſaid unto the Lord? The hearts of the beſt are fickle; impreſſions of good are eaſily worn off them, and very ſoon too do they begin to wear weak We have much need therefore to be putting ourſelves in mind of what paſſ'd in that caſe, leſt the heart be like the adultereſs, *which forſaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God,* Prov. ii 17.

3. Becauſe there is a competition in our caſe betwixt the Lord, and the world with the luſts thereof: and after we have ſaid to the Lord, *Thou art my refuge and my portion,* theſe will ſet upon us to take them for a refuge and portion. Wherefore this is neceſſary in that caſe to make a deciſion of the caſe ſtill, and to ſilence the Lord's competitors, and cut off their pretences to us: Even as a woman already eſpouſed would recogniſe her eſpouſals, to ſilence one continuing to make ſuit to her, Tit. ii. 12

4. To excite ourſelves to the duty of the relation conſtituted by that ſaying. If we have taken refuge under the ſhadow of the Lord's wings, we muſt be as obedient children, walking according to the law of our God, our Huſband, elder Brother, and King. If we have taken him for our portion, we muſt live to and for him, as we live by him, Pſal. cxi. 18. But we will be ready to neglect our duty, if we call not to mind the engagements to it taken upon us.

5. *Laſtly,* To ſtrengthen us in the faith of the privileges

privileges of the relation. It will serve to confirm our trust in him for safety and satisfaction, when we remember that we have said unto the Lord, *Thou art my refuge and my portion.* I will be a means to cause us to adhere to him as such, Job xiii. 15. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*

I come now to apply this doctrine to them that have said the Lord is their refuge and their portion, and to those who cannot be brought to say it.

FIRST, Let me address myself to you who have said unto the Lord, Thou art my refuge and portion, at a communion-table or otherwise.

*First*, Since ye have said it, recognise, reflect upon, and call to mind your saying it.

1. Do it often; often call to mind your saying of it. We find David often upon it, Psal xvi 2. forecited. Psal. xxxi. 14. "I said, Thou art my God. cxix. 57. "Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said, that I "would keep thy words. cxl. 6. I have said unto the "Lord, thou art my God." Ye cannot remember it too often; for it is a thought that is always seasonable. It must be habitually in your mind: it must never be out of it, either virtually or expressly. For your hearts are apt to forget the Lord; and, forgetting him, and your relation and engagement to him, ye go all wrong

2. Do it occasionally at some times in an explicit manner. Come over that your transaction with God, and set it again before your eyes expressly, and that on these four occasions especially.

(1.) When a temptation is before you to sin, in thought, word, or deed; as Joseph did, Gen. xxxix. 9. *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Many think they are to be excused in the woful out-breakings of their corruption, because forsooth they are provoked and tempted: As if a soldier should say, he did not yield to the enemy until he attacked him. But ye are called to resist temptation, that ye may re-

resist it, to remember that ye have said unto the Lord, *Thou art my refuge and portion.* Let that thought pass through your heart before ye yield, and it will help you to stand.

(2.) When ye find yourselves unfit for or backward to duty, take this into your thoughts in a believing manner: so will ye see both what may excite you to duty, and what may encourage, strengthen, and oil the wheels of your soul: as Paul experienced, Rom. vii. 24, 25 "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver "me from the body of this death? I thank God through "Jesus Christ our Lord." Here is your relation to God, and your privilege.

(3.) When we are in danger or difficulties that ye know not how to get through; then remember, that ye have said to the Lord, *Thou art my refuge.* This is the way to compose your souls in a patient waiting for God, and comfortable expectation of relief from him; whether they be dangers of your soul, body, outward estate, reputation, &c.

(4.) When ye are under the world's frowns, things going wrong with you there, when the persons or things of the world disappoint you in your expectations from them: then remember you have said, *Thou art my portion.* This will be of use to compose your heart under all these, since these are not, but God is your portion.

3. Do it sometimes in a solemn stated manner, taking some time by yourself alone to review what passed betwixt God and your soul in the day you said, *Thou art my refuge and portion.* Self-examination is necessary after as well as before a communion: and I must say, it is a very bad sign, when people are at no pains that way after a communion. If ye have not done it as yet, see that ye do it this night; retire yourselves by yourselves a while, and review what you said to the Lord this day-eight days; to whom, how, upon what grounds, and where ye said it. And particularly examine yourselves, whether ye said it sin-

ſincerely or not, *Thou art my refuge.* If you have made God in Chriſt your refuge then,

(1.) Ye will have a ſuperlative eſteem of him above all perſons and things, 1 Pet. ii. 7 *Unto you that believe he is precious.* The city of refuge was better to the refugee than all the land of Canaan beſides, for there only could he be in ſafety of his life. And God in Chriſt will be better to the ſincere ſoul than all perſons or things elſe: Pſal. lxxiii 25. "Whom have I in "heaven but? and there is none upon earth that I de-"ſire beſides thee. Luke xiv. 26. If any man come "after me, and hate not his father and mother, *&c.* he "cannot be my diſciple.

(2.) Ye will have fled to him for ſafety from ſin, as well as from wrath, Matth i. 21. "Thou ſhalt call "his name Jeſus: for he ſhall ſave his people from "their ſins." Ye will have made his ſanctifying Spirit, as well as his juſtifying blood, your refuge. And becauſe the ſincere refugee flees from ſin as ſin, your ſouls will be longing to be rid of all ſin, counting it as your enemy and the purſuing avenger; and the remains of of ſin in you, will be your ſouls burden, Rom. vii. 24. forecited.

(3.) Ye will look for ſafety from God in Chriſt alone, and not from the law or your own works: *For by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified*, Gal. ii. 16. From thence will be the ſupport of your ſouls. When a man is without the city of refuge, if the avenger of blood purſue hot, then he quickens his pace; if he halts, then he halts, all his motions and comforts depending on his motions or haltings. But when he has got within the city, it is not ſo with him. Thus as to men out of Chriſt, the great motives to obedience are fear of puniſhment and hope of reward by their works, which are the great grounds of their comfort: but the ſoul which has made God in Chriſt its refuge, looks for its ſafety only from Chriſt's works and ſuffering, Phil. iii. 3. *rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus,*

*Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh*; and so its labour is turned into a *labour of love*, Heb. vi 10.

*Secondly*, Since ye have said, That God in Christ is your refuge, hold by it, and carry yourselves accordingly.

1. Abide in your refuge, John xv. 4. Cleave to God in Christ as your refuge for ever, Acts xi. 23. Your continuance there is necessary to evidence your sincerity, John viii. 31. "If ye continue in my love, "then are ye my disciples indeed." Drawing back is dangerous, Heb. x 38. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." It speaks hypocrisy, 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but "they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they "would no doubt have continued with us: but they "went out, that they might be made manifest, that "they were not all of us." And,

(1.) Venture not out without the borders of your refuge, Heb. iii. 12. "Take heed lest there be in any "of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from "the living God." A man is no longer in safety, than he is within the refuge, Num. xxxv. 26, 27. For without it death reigns, without it is nothing but the land of darkness and shadow of death.

(2.) Beware of betaking yourselves to any other refuges, for their is no safety in them, Acts iv. 12. forecited. Every man is sensible he needs a defence, something to trust to for safety in his straits: but all things else besides God in Christ will be found lying refuges which will not secure you, Isa. xxviii. 17: And,

[1.] Make not men your refuge. For, "Thus saith the "Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and "maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from "the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desart, "and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit "the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land "and not inhabited," Jer. xvii. 5, 6. David was not one that had much experience of men's sufficiency, and dis-

liſappointing the expectations of thoſe that truſted in hem, Pſal cxlii. 4 "I looked on my right hand, and 'beheld, but there was no man that would know me; 'refuge failed me; no man cared for my ſoul. There-'fore ſaith he, It is better to truſt in the Lord, than 'to put confidence in man. It is better to truſt in the 'Lord, than to put confidence in princes, Pſal. cxviii. '8, 9. Put not your truſt in princes, nor in the ſon 'of man, in whom there is no help His breath goeth 'forth, he returneth to his earth: in that very day 'his thoughts periſh. Happy is he that hath the God 'of Jacob for his help, whoſe hope is in the Lord his 'God, Pſal cxlvi. 3, 4, 5." Wherefore in all caſes where ye may be in hazard this way of placing confidence n men beware of it, and place your confidence in God.

[2] Nor make world's wealth your refuge, Prov. xviii. 11 'The rich man's wealth is his ſtrong city, nd as an high wall in his own conceit.' O what ſafety re men apt to promiſe to themſelves from their abun-lance! and yet after all it proves but a refuge of lies, Pſal lii. 6 7. "The righteous alſo ſhall ſee, and fear, nd ſhall laugh at him. Lo, this is the man that made not God his ſtrength: but truſted in the abundance of his riches, and ſtrengthened himſelf in his wickedneſs." Much need is there then to take heed to the advice, Pſal. xii 10 *If riches increaſe, ſet not your heart upon them.*

[3.] Nor make your own works and duties your refuge. Paul could not truſt himſelf under that covert, but deſired to be "found in Chriſt, not having his own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith" Phil. iii 9. It is natural to men, when conſcience is raiſed on them, and begins to purſue them, to flee to their own works and doings, and to ſeek refuge about mount Sinai for their guilty ſouls, as the Jews did, who ſought after righteouſneſs, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, Rom. ix. 32. Your only ſafety is under the covert of blood.

[4] Nor uncovenanted mercy, mercy for mere mercy's ſake, as many do who, not careful to be ſavingly intereſted in Chriſt, betake themſelves to mercy, without betaking themſelves to Chriſt by faith. Theſe juſtice will draw from the horns of the altar: for *without ſhedding of blood is remiſſion*, Heb. ix. 22. It is mercy through a propitiation, that is the only ſafe refuge for a guilty creature; for ſaid the publican, *God be merciful* [*propitious*, Gr.] *to me a ſinner*, Luke xviii. 11.

2. Improve your refuge for ſafety, comfort and eſtabliſhment in all caſes. This is the life of faith which all believers are called to, as that wherein their duty and intereſt jointly lie, Gal. ii. 20. "I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me." And,

(1.) With reſpect to ſin, improve your refuge. When ye are aſſaulted with temptation from the devil, the world, and the fleſh, betake yourſelves to God in Chriſt for ſafety and preſervation, as Paul did, Rom. vii. 24, 25. foreſaid. Ye are in this world as in a wilderneſs, where your ſouls enemies are ready to attack you, and cauſe you to violate your fidelity to your Lord and Huſband; ye ſhould then cry out to him, that ye ſuffer violence, and flee into the arms of his grace, where ye may be ſafe. Thus did Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9 who being haraſſed with a thorn in the fleſh, a meſſenger of Satan, beſought the Lord, that it might depart from him; and received this anſwer, "My grace is ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs." Mens grappling with temptations in their own ſtrength, is the cauſe why ſo often they come foul off, Prov. xxviii. 26. *He that truſteth in his own heart, is a fool.*

(2.) With reſpect to the law as a covenant of works. There is no ſtanding before it, but under this covert. Sometimes it invades the believer, and makes high demands of him for his ſalvation. [1.]

Thou

Thou art a sinner, and justice must be satisfied for thy sin: then flee thou into thy refuge, and hide thyself in the wounds of the Redeemer; plead the satisfaction of his death and sufferings, and hold them betwixt you and the fiery law: so shall ye stop its mouth, Job xxxiii. 23, 24. "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." [2] Thou canst not have a right to heaven without working for it works perfectly good, and exactly agreeable to the law: For it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal iii. 10 Then improve your refuge, and by faith laying hold on Christ's perfect obedience to all the ten commands, plead that as your security, and so you shall be safe, Rom. iv. 5. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." [3] If the law yet insist and say, But thy nature is corrupt and stained; flee to thy refuge, and plead the holiness of Christ's birth and nature, by virtue of which imputed to thee, thou art without spot before the throne of God, Cant. v. 7 Rom iv 8 both formerly cited. Here is your only safety in this case.

(3.) With respect to the evil day, Jer xvii 17. We have just ground to expect a day of trial, a day of common calamity, abiding this church and land, as well as each of us may lay our account with personal trials and afflictions. And we should improve our refuge in that case for our comfort and establishment.

[1.] Before it come. The prospect of trials is often very heavy, and unbelief taking a view of them, is ready to rack and torture the heart with that, how one shall be carried through. But the man who has taken God for his refuge, should improve it so, as to establish his heart in the faith of through-bearing,

come what will come, Hab. iii 17. 18 "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." There is good reason for it: for however great the trial be, our refuge is sufficient both against sin and danger: therefore says Paul, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Jer xv. 11. "Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction."

[2.] When it is come. Whatever storms blow believers have such a cover over their heads, as may afford safety, comfort, and establishment: for *if God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom viii. 31. There is a kindly invitation given to all God's people, with respect to the evil day, Isa. xxvi 20. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." And the voice of faith in answer thereto is, "My soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast," Psal lvii. 1. It is good news, that Zion's God reigneth whatever the time brings forth.

(4) With respect to death. Death is of all terrible the most terrible, and is therefore called *the king of terrors*. But those who have taken God in Christ for their refuge, have what may comfort and establish them, even in that case. Even from that last enemy God is a refuge. So that,

[1] The fear of death ought not to perplex and terrify them. David could say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me," Psal. xxiii 4. Death can do no harm to those whose refuge the Lord is. For,

[2] The

[2.] The ſting of death cannot reach them. They may ſit within their refuge, and ſing, "O death, where "is they ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? The "ſting of death is ſin; and the ſtrength of ſin is the "law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the vic- "tory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," 1 Cor xv. 55, 56, 57. The refuge was provided againſt ſin and death in a peculiar manner, and they may expect all ſafety in it, under the covert of the wings of a crucified Redeemer. And it is the weakneſs of faith that makes them ſo fearful about it.

SECONDLY. Ye who cannot be brought to ſay unto God in Chriſt, *Thou art my refuge and my portion*, to take God in Chriſt for your refuge; I would have you,

1. To reflect on the folly of this your courſe. And you may ſee it, if you conſider, that,

(1.) There is no ſafety for you without this refuge. Ye are guilty, and the avenger is the juſtice of God, by which ye will undoubtedly fall, if ye get not within this refuge. Ye muſt either be in Chriſt, or God will purſue you as an enemy. And, [1.] He is a juſt God, and ye cannot eſcape by flattering him. Gen. xviii. 25. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* [2.] He is every where preſent and ye cannot flee from him, Pſal. cxxxix. 7. [3.] He is omnipotent; and ſo ye cannot reſiſt him and make head againſt him. "Who hath hardened himſelf againſt him, and hath proſpered?" Job ix. 4. [4.] He is eternal, and ye cannot outlive him. See 2 Theſſ i. 6. ——9.

(2.) That however long ye delay, ye muſt draw to it at laſt, or periſh. And who knows but ye may come too late?

2. I would have you inſtantly to repent, and turn to this refuge, Zech ix 12 "Turn ye to the ſtrong- "hold, ye priſoners of hope." Though ye have ſit many calls, and given Chriſt many refuſals, yet there is room for your ſaying unto him *Thou art my refuge, and my portion*; he allows you to take your word again, and

rue upon him, Jer. xl ii. 27.—*O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?* How peremptory were the people in their refusal, Jer. ii. 25. "Thou saidst, There is no hope. No, for I have loved "strangers, and after them will I go." Yet see chap. iii. 1.—"But thou hast played the harlot with many "lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord." Christ insists upon your saying to him, *Thou art my refuge, and my portion;* gives you one offer of himself after another: Why so, but because he would have you yet to be wise, and turn to him. Come then, sinners, while yet there is room.

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## God in Christ the Believer's Portion *.

PSALM cxlii. 5.

*I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my refuge, and my portion, in the land of the living.*

HAving considered the nature of the refuge and portion mentioned in the text, especially that of the refuge, and shewn that those who have taken God in Christ for their refuge and portion, should recognise their so doing, I now proceed to another doctrine from the words, *viz.*

DOCT. *To these who have sincerely made God in Christ their refuge, the same God in Christ is their portion to live on in that refuge.*

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider God in Christ as a portion to live on.

II. Shew in what respects he is the believer's portion,

* This discourse, consisting of more sermons than one, was delivered in September 1722.

tion, or the portion of those who have taken him for their refuge.

III Confirm the doctrine.

IV. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to consider God in Christ as a portion to live on. For understanding of this, consider,

*First*, Man needed and doth need a portion Portions are given to supply wants, and answer the needs of those who get them. The need is twofold.

1. By necessity of nature, from the moment of his being, he needed a portion, something without himself to live upon. Innocent Adam did not need a refuge to flee to, guilt brought on that necessity. While he kept free from sin, none could do him harm. But he needed a portion as he was a creature, and therefore was not self-sufficient, which is an incommunicable property of God, Gen. xvii. 1. *I am God all-sufficient*. God was infinitely happy in himself, before there was any creature; but no creature can be happy in itself, having desires to be satisfied, that must be satisfied from another quarter.

2. By necessity of loss. God himself, without the intervention of a mediator, was man's portion at first, and the well-furnished world was but the inclast to the bargain, Gen. i. 26, 27. It was never given him for his portion; for it was what his innocent soul could never have subsisted on. But when he gave him every herb for the support of his earthly part, he gave him himself as his God for the support of his heavenly part. But man by sin lost his portion, God turning his enemy, and all access to the enjoyment of God being stopt. Thus mankind was left in a starving condition.

*Secondly*, The same way that God became a refuge to which guilty sinners might have access, he became a portion to which starving sinners might have access, namely, in Christ. The former drew with it the latter.

1. None less than a God could ever be a sufficient portion to man. Indeed if man had no nobler part than

than the body, the earth of which it was made, might be a sufficient portion to him, as it is to the beasts. But since he is endowed with a rational soul, which is capable of desires that all the creation cannot satisfy, and none but God himself can, it is evident, that only God himself can be a sufficient portion to man.

2 But an absolute God could never be enjoyed as a portion by a sinful creature. Justice stood in the way of it, which requires the sinner to die the death, according to the threatning, Gen. ii 17. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" and therefore forbade the enjoying of their portion, by which the sinner might live. What was the life promised in the covenant of works, but that complete happiness flowing from the full enjoyment of God in heaven, and the happiness flowing from the enjoyment of him here? The covenant then being broken, the justice of God necessarily staved him off from this.

3 But God having clothed himself with our nature in the person of the Son, and so became a refuge to the guilty creature, he became also a portion for the starving creature, upon which it might live. As a refuge we find in him a covert from revenging wrath, and what fully answers the demands of the law on our account. Hence taking him for our refuge, and so sheltering ourselves under the shade of a crucified Redeemer, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead, there is nothing to hinder our enjoyment of him as our portion, Psal. xvi. 5, 10.

*Thirdly*, God in Christ then is a portion, legally destined for, and offered to sinners in the gospel. He is a portion for them to live on, as well as a refuge for them to flee unto, John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." I take up this in these three things.

1. The soul of man may live on the enjoyment of God (Lam. iii 24) in Christ. It needs no more to make

make it live happily, John vi. 57. *He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* The prodigal when he was minded to return to his father, was convinced of this, Luke xv 17 "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" And if you ask, What is this bread? our Lord Christ answers, John vi 51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" And if ye ask, Where the strength of this bread lies for nourishing of the soul? it is answered, John vi 63 "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. Col ii 9, 10 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power" The enjoyment of God in Christ,

(1.) Removes the maladies of the soul. Psal ciii.

3 *Bless the Lord, O my soul,—who healeth all thy diseases.* Sin has cast the soul into extreme disorders, has left it in a diseased condition, and the sickness is mortal, which the soul cannot miss to die of eternally, if it be not cured. John viii 24 *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* It is cast into a fever of raging lusts, which cause in it many irregular and preternatural desires. And the answering of these desires does but increase the distemper of the soul. Men whose portion the world is, endeavour to satisfy them from their portion, but all in vain, Eccl. i. 8. "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." Hab. ii 5. "He is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied" Neither can they be satisfied from a holy God, whose holiness is perfectly opposite to their nature. But here lies the matter:

The enjoyment of God in Christ kills these desires, and frees the soul from them, according to the measure

of

of it, John iv. 14. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Like as the feverish man's drought is slaked, according to the measure of his recovery wrought by some suitable remedy; so God in Christ being enjoyed by faith, the irregular desires or lusts of the soul die; and when God in Christ shall be perfectly enjoyed in heaven, they shall be perfectly expelled out of the soul, Heb. xii. 23. Thus mortification is the effect of the enjoyment of God in Christ: and as lusts die, the soul lives, lives happily and comfortably.

(2.) It satisfies the regular cravings of the soul, Is. lv 2. "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Take away the lustings, flowing from the distemper of the soul by sin, the desires of the heart are brought into a narrow compass, all centering in one thing, *viz.* what is really needful and useful for the soul's well-being, Luke x. *ult. One thing is needful* Psal. xxvii 4 "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." And that is to be found in the enjoyment of God in Christ, Psal. xxvii. 4. and lxxiii. 25. forecited. Now the regular cravings of the soul may be comprised in these two things

[1.] A desire of what may perfect its nature Every thing has a native inclination towards its own perfection: and the sinful creature being made a new creature, has a strong inclination to its own perfection, and consequently desires what may advance that. Hence we read of the lusting of the Spirit, Gal. v. 17. the groanings of the gracious soul under the remains of corruption, Rom vii 24. Now that which is perfecting to the renewed soul is the transformation of it into the image of God, 1 John iii 2. For this is it by which it is brought back into the happy

by state it was created in at first Gen. i. 27. And without question every thing is the more perfect, the nearer it comes to the likeness of him who is the fountain of all perfection. And therefore holiness is indeed the happiness and life of the soul. Now the enjoyment of God in Christ answers this desire of the soul, according to the measure thereof. And in Christ there is a fulness for satisfying of it; for in him there is a fulness of the Spirit of sanctification, with light, life, strength, *&c.* and whatsoever is necessary for nourishing up the new creature to perfection, John i. 16. Rev iii. 1. And through the enjoyment of God in him, the perfection of the soul is carried on, according to the degrees of the enjoyment, 2 Cor iv. 18

[2] A desire of what may continue it in its perfection. This also is what every thing has a native inclination to, since nothing can desire its own destruction. And this the new creature or renewed soul is also endowed with, namely, a desire of its being for ever continued in the state of perfection once attained unto. But what portion is sufficient for such a boundless desire of the soul? Not this world surely, which will not last, but will be burnt up; but the eternal God, the everlasting Father, of infinite perfections, who is an inhaustible fountain of perfection for ever. Therefore says the psalmist, "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever," Psal. lxxiii 26.

2 There is a sufficiency in God in Christ for the whole man, soul and body too Rom. xi. 36 "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things." He is infinite in perfections, therefore there can be nothing wanting in him, which is necessary for the good of his creature any manner of way, Job xi. 7. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Hence David says, Psal. xxxiv. 10. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." So that he who would have

have a portion, that might furnish him with all he needs, both for his soul and his body, may have it in a God in Christ. Thus God in Christ is a portion the whole man may live on.

*Quest.* How can that be?

*Ans.* 1 There is enough in God to give a man full contentment of heart in any lot whatsoever, to cause him say from inward feeling that he has enough, whatever be his wants, Phil. iv. 11. *I have learned*, says the apostle, *in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* Hab iii. 17, 18 formerly quoted. And that is equivalent to one's having all, and wanting nothing, 2 Cor. vi. 10. Phil. iv. 18. A man living thus in a cottage, with coarse fare and a small measure of it, lives better than a discontented king in his palace, Luke xii 15. "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." God satisfies such as with marrow and fat, of which a small quantity fills so as the man desires no more, but rejoiceth in his portion.

2. All good things whatsoever, that are not formally in God, are eminently and virtually in him as in their cause, Matth xix. 17, 18. *There is none good but one, that is God.* That is to say, As one getting a great sum of money for his portion, may live upon it; because tho' it is not formally meat nor cloaths, he cannot eat it nor clothe himself with the metal; yet it is virtually and in effect both meat and cloaths, in so far as it can purchase these things to the man, and so is equivalent to all such things, Eccl. x. 19. *Money answereth all things.* Even so one getting God in Christ for his portion may live upon him; because he can furnish him with all good things whatsoever: so having him to be theirs, they have all in effect, since he has all, 1 Cor. iii. 21. not only all for the soul, but all for the body too.

These two grounds being laid, I say there is a sufficiency in a God in Christ for all that is necessary for the whole man; so that they who have him for their portion,

portion, have in him a sufficiency for the body as well as for the soul. And,

1*st*, For their maintenance. in meat and drink. That day the man takes God for his portion, his bread is baken. his provision is secured for time, as well as for eternity. That is a clause in the disposition made to them of their portion, Psal. xxxvii. 3 *Verily thou shalt be fed.* Isa. xxxiii. 16. *Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.* All living is fed by him, Psal. cxlv 15 However poor and needy they may be, he who feeds his birds, will not neglect his babes, Psal. cxlvii. 9.

*Quest.* But what can a man make of that sufficiency in God as a portion for maintenance, when he has empty pantries to go to?

*Ans* If he go by faith to his portion as his maintenance, he may make these four things of it

(1.) He may get providential provision brought to him in the channel of the covenant, that is, as an accomplishment of the promise on which he relies. And if that were bare bread and water, it will be more sweet to the godly man than the most delicious meats to one whose portion God is not. So I doubt not Elijah's fare was sweeter to him, 1 Kings xvii. 6. than the fare of Baal's priests at Jezebel's table Godly persons in straits helped to live by faith, get many sweet experiences, which they want when their lot is more plentiful. And sure I am the creature never tastes so sweet, as when it comes in answer to prayer and faith in the promise.

(2.) He may get a little to serve far, as in the case of Daniel and his companions, Dan. i. 15. whose countenances, at the end of ten days, appeared fairer, and fatter in flesh, by living on pulse and water, than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Nature may be content with little, and grace with less; whereas lust can never get enough. There is a curse that insensibly wastes the provision of some; while the small provision of others, by God's blessing,

comes to be like the widow's barrel of meal, and cruise of oil, 1 Kings xvii. She never had much, but yet she never wanted altogether. It is a certain truth, that *man doth not live by bread alone* Matth iv. 4.; and that as men may eat plentifully, and not have enough, so they may be kept at very slender provision, and yet through grace have abundance.

(3.) When the streams are quite dry, he may get a draught of the fountain that will be strengthening and refreshful to his very body. Moses being in the mount with God, eat none for forty days, and missed neither meat nor drink. It is true, that was miraculous: but it tells us, that the godly man's portion is able to feed him without meat or drink. And I believe the experience of many of the saints proves, that a watering of grace to the soul is even sometimes refreshing and strengthening to the very body, agreeable to these scripture-texts, Isa lxvi. 14 *Your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb.* Psal xxxv. 9, 19. "My soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?"

(4.) He may quietly and contentedly, in the faith of the promise, hang on at the door of his storehouse, not doubting but his Father will seasonably interpose for his help and relief, after he has tried him, and thus feed on hope. Psal xxxvii. 3. *Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* And this is one of those ways how the Lord's people are satisfied in days of famine, verse 19. Do not you observe, that sometimes the hungry child cries for bread, and the mother gives him a promise of it some time after, and thereupon he is easy? And may we not think a promise embraced by faith, will have a satisfying influence on a child of God?

2*dly*, For their cloathing. That likewise is an appurtenance of the saints portion, Matth vi. 30. "If God so cloath the grass of the field, which to-day is, and

and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little faith?" There is a lust for cloathing and attire, for satisfying of which earth and seas and even the most remote countries, Persia and the Indies, are ransacked: and yet that lust is not satisfied; still some new thing is desired. But, O the satisfaction of heart, where the man or woman lodges the key of their wardrobe in the hand of a God in Christ, believing that he will cloath them as is meet in his sight. This made the sheep-skins and goat skins wherein the worthies, Heb. xi. 37 wandered about, more comfortable to them than the most gorgeous apparel could be to their persecutors

3*dly*. For their housing or lodging. Psal xc. 1. *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations* They that have God for their portion, though they were cast out of house and hold, will not want a place where they may lodge securely and comfortably. He who made a fiery furnace a comfortable lodging to the three children, can make any place sweet to his own. Jacob never lodged a night more comfortably, than when he durst not stay at his father's house for Esau, but got the vault of the heavens for the roof of his bed-chamber, the bare field for his bed, and a stone for his bolster, Gen. xxviii. That he preferred, as the house of God, to all the houses that ever his foot was in, verse 17.

4*thly*. For their provision with money. They that are lovers of it, shall never get enough of it, heap up as they will, Eccl. v. 10. Nay, it is ruining to them who seek it, use it, and value themselves upon it, as their portion, 1 Tim. vi. 10 "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." But those whose portion God is, shall have as much of it as he sees they really need; and that is abundance, Job xxii. 25. *Thou shalt have plenty of silver*. If their portion furnish them not money, it will furnish them money-worth,

what is as good and better, Heb *silver of strength, ibid.* The people of God might be very easy on this head, if they could believe that all the riches of the world belong to him, and are at his disposal, and that infinite wisdom and love carves out their portion of them: and that therefore if their part thereof be small, it is necessary for them it should be so, and that want is made up another way, Hag. ii. 8, 9. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

*Lastly*, For a purchase to them. If men are for a heritage, some possession they might call their own, there is no such sure way for it as to take God in Christ for their portion. God gives bits of the earth, lairdships and lordships, &c. to some few of his children, though but few of them, 1 Cor. i. 26. The greatest part of those who are so well provided now, are those who have no more to expect at his hand. But,

(1.) Whereas worldly men have but bits of this earth, that they can call theirs; they that have God for their portion, have a right to the whole earth as their Father's ground, Matth. v. 5. *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.* It is not the carnal worldlings that fight and worry one another for it, but the meek and quiet ones whose hearts rest in God, that shall inherit the earth. There is often a great difference betwixt the saints and others in this earth in respect of their possessions; they whom God has least kindness for, oft-times get the largest share of earth: but betwixt a believer and an unbeliever in that case there is just such a difference, as betwixt the young heir and one of his father's tenants. The tenant may be in possession of much of the land, while the young heir possesses not a furrow of it: but he has a right to it all; the tenant has no more than what he must pay a dear rent for, and may be turned out of at the term.

(2.) Whereas

(2.) Whereas worldly mens property is confined to this earth, and they have no peculiar interest in the visible heavens, air, sun, moon, and stars; the children of God's property extends to these also, and they have a peculiar interest in them, as the outworks of their Father's palace, Psal viii. 3. The visible heavens are a space of the universe, which Providence has kindly put beyond the reach of men to impropriate: so that the beggar and the king are equally free to the air, sun, moon, *&c.* If it had been otherwise, no doubt the men of the world would have divided these among them too, as well as they have done the earth, waters, and seas; so that the meaner sort would have had the light of the sun, moon, *&c.* to have paid for to the proprietors, as well as they have their houses and farms on the earth, *&c.* to pay for. But blessed be God, worldly men's heritage extends not that far. Yea, but the portioners of a God in Christ have a peculiar interest there, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." Each of them may look up, and say, That is my sun and my moon, my stars, my air, purchased by the blood of my elder Brother, and disponed in the everlasting covenant by his Father to me, to give light to me, and for me to breathe in, by day and night, and discharged to wrong or hurt me, Psal. cxxi. 6. "The sun shall not smite thee by day; nor the moon by night."

(3.) Whereas worldly men have no claim at all to the highest heavens, and so have no place to go to when they shall be shaken out of the earth at the resurrection, but the pit of hell; the heirs, the portioners of God in Christ, their great interest lies there. Heaven is their own country, their own city, kingdom, and mansion-house: it is their own home, which they shall never depart from, if once they were there. It is disponed to them with their portion, and Christ as their proxy has taken possession of it for them in

their name, Heb. vi 20. *Whither the forerunner is for us entered.* Hence they are said to be settled there already, Eph. ii. 6. In one word, they enjoy all in their head, Col. ii 9 10.

3 Every man may have this God in Christ secured to him as his portion, in virtue of the everlasting covenant offered in the gospel For thus the covenant is proposed to be believed, embraced, and appropriated by all to whom the gospel comes, Heb. viii. 10. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." A man's portion speaks a disposal of it to him by gift from the donor, and his property in it by claiming it as his own, and so accepting the gift. Thus God in Christ is a portion offered to all to whom the gospel comes, and a portion accepted by believers. I take up this in four things.

1*st*, The all which man is capable to enjoy, is divided into two great parts, God and the creature. This division was made by sin; for before it entered, man enjoyed God and the creature, the latter as the incalt to the former: but man falling off from God, chose the creature as a portion in opposition to God, Luke xv. 12, 13. "The younger said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." He left his father, with his portion. And thus all men by nature, while the two portions are set before them, grasp the creature as their portion.

2*dly*, Man by this choice brought himself into a wretched condition. (1.) He betook himself to a portion that could never be sufficient for him, Isa. lv. 2. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?"

not?" (2.) He loft all right to God as a portion any more. His name became *Lo-ammi, Not my people*, Hof. i 9 Therefore men in their natural ftate are faid to be *without God*, Eph. ii 12 ; and if man had been never fo willing to have returned to the poffeffion of God as his portion, by the firft bargain, he could have had no accefs, more than the fallen angels. Gen. iii. 22, 24. Yea and it was quite beyond his power to have procured himfelf accefs to God again as his portion.

3*dly*, God in Chrift hath freely made over himfelf as a portion to finners. in the gofpel; fo that they all may, and are welcome to take poffeffion of him as their portion again. This is Heaven's grant to poor finners of the race of Adam, from which fallen angels are excluded. John iii. 16. "God fo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whofoever believeth in him, fhould not perifh, but have everlafting life." Compare Prov. viii 4. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the fons men." And thus the mercies of the covenant are called finners *own mercies*, John ii. 8 and the living God *the Saviour of all men*, 1 Tim. iv. 10. and falvation *the common falvation*, Jude 3.

*Queft.* But how hath God made over himfelf to loft finners of Adam's race, as a portion?

*Anf* By way of free gift to be received by faith. Hence Chrift is called *the gift of God*, John iv. 10. If. ix. 6. John vi. 32.; his righteoufnefs a *gift*, Rom. v 17. yea, and eternal life is *given*, 1 John v 11: This is the free gift made by Heaven to Adam's family, fo that they may by faith, every one of them, claim it, and take poffeffion thereof, without fear of vitious intromiffion. And this is indeed the foundation of faith; for no man can warrantably take what he has no manner of right to, nor can any receive what is not firft given him. There muft be a giving on God's part, before there can be a receiving on our part, John iii. 27.

The

The purport of what is said on this head is, That there is a gift of this portion made to you and every one of you. And by this gospel it is intimated to you, 1 John v. 11 so that nothing remains to make it your own in a saving manner, but that you by faith claim it and take possession of it. Ye have a clear and solid ground on which ye may do so, whatever be your case, Rev. xxii. 17. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And this brings me to the

4th and *last* thing, *viz.* Faith claims the gift of this portion, appropriates it, and takes possession thereof; so that it becomes actually the believer's own portion in a saving manner, John i. 12. The sinner convinced of his utter poverty and want, and the insufficiency of the whole creation to satisfy the soul in the starving condition that it is therefore in, hears and believes that God in Christ hath given himself as a portion to sinners, and therefore to himself in particular, in the word of the promise of the gospel; and therefore trusts and confides in him as his portion, for happiness and satisfaction, upon the warrant of the word of grace. Thus faith takes possession, and saith as in the text, "Thou art my portion. Lam. iii. 24 The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him See Psal. ii. *ult.* Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Isa xxvi. 3, 4. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." Thus the man renounceth all other portions, believes a sufficiency in God, and that that sufficiency shall be made forthcoming to him, according to the promise, and so rests in God in Christ as his portion. This is saving faith, by which the soul takes God for its portion.

Even as if where a family is ruined and reduced to beggary, a friend of theirs should draw up a disposition, wherein he makes over to them his estate, unknown

to them. And while they are going about in a starving condition, he causes intimate it to them, that they may come and claim it, and take possession of it, and so live on it. In that case, those of that family that claim it, enjoy it as their own: but if any of them will not believe the grant of the estate to be made to them, and therefore will not put in their claim to it, nor lay their weight on it; they must starve for all it, it never becomes theirs actually to any saving purpose. Adam's posterity is this family; God in Christ is the friend; the gospel promise in the Bible, is the disposition; the preaching of the gospel is the intimation; faith is the making of the claim; and unbelief is the not putting in a claim.

Thus have I shewn you how God in Christ is a portion for sinners to live on. I shall,

*Fourthly* and *lastly*, Speak of the properties of this portion.

1. God in Christ is a suitable portion, Isa. lv. 2: "Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Many have little satisfaction in the portion given them, because it is not suitable to their case: but God in Christ is a portion suited to all the necessities of poor sinners, and therefore they may rejoice in him, Isa. lxi 7. The whole world cannot make a suitable portion for man's soul. He spake like a fool who said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," Luke xii. 20. The soul being a spiritual substance, carnal things can never be a suitable portion to it, as being quite unsuitable to its nature. But God is a spirit, of infinite perfections, and therefore a suitable portion for the soul.

2. The double portion. Such a portion belonged to the first-born, Deut xxi 17. by which we may understand that which Elisha prayed for: *I pray thee*, said he to Elijah, *let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.* This seems to have had something typical in it: for all believers in Christ, in the language of the

the Holy Ghost are *first-born*. Heb xii 23 denoting that to them belongs the blessing the dominion the priesthood and the double portion. Now God in Christ is their portion, therefore he is the double portion. This world is but the single portion, a portion for unbelievers; whatever be theirs, God is not theirs: But they that have God for their portion, they have the good things of this life as the incast to the bargain, Matth v. 33. 1 Tim iv 8 God's dealing with saints and sinners, is like that of Abraham with his children, Gen. xxv 5 6 "Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away." All is the believer's, Rom viii. 17. compare Heb. i. 2

3. A full portion, Col. i. 19. 'It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell;' compared with chap. ii. 9. 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' There is no worldly portion that one has or can have, but there is always something wanting in it. There was a want even in paradise. The treasures and kingdoms of the greatest monarch on earth cannot furnish all things. But there is a fulness in God himself, he is *all-sufficient*, Gen xvii. 1. Eph. i. 23. The saints in heaven are all filled by him, so that they want nothing; and sometimes he has filled saints on earth, that they have been made to cry, Hold, lest the earthen pitcher, the body, should burst with the incomes of his fulness.

4. A heart-satisfying portion, Psal. lxiii. 5 6. "My soul shall be satisfied, says David, as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, &c" Man's heart is a devouring depth, into which if one should cast the fulness of ten thousand worlds, it would all be swallowed up; and the heart would still be crying, *Give, give*. For the whole creation, yea all possible creations, cannot be commensurable to the desires of the soul of man; because the Creator enlarged its capacity to the enjoying of himself an infinite good, nothing

nothing less can truly satisfy or still its desires and cravings. But God himself is a portion satisfying to the soul: while he pours in of his goodness to the soul, it desires nothing beyond him, and nothing besides him, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Here is a portion, in which the restless soul comes to rest, like the hungry infant set on the breast, Isa. lxvi. 11.

5. A certain and secure portion, Matth. vi. 19, 20. "Lay not up for your selves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for your selves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." No worldly portion is so; all of that kind is but moveables, which may be lost: but the saints portion is not so, Heb. xii. 28. "a kingdom which cannot be moved." How many have had riches and wealth one-time a-day, who have been robbed and spoiled of all, having nothing left them? But none can take away this portion; for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," Rom. xi. 29. And this is the advantage of having God for our portion, in the tenor of the second covenant, beyond that of the first, John x. 28, 29. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

6. A durable portion. As there is no losing of it, so there is no wasting of it neither, John iv. 14. Many have had great portions in the world, who have got through them having spent so prodigally that they have left themselves nothing. But this portion is infinite, so it is a well that can never be drawn dry. This is enough to bear the believer's ordinary and extraordinary charges, as the worthies, Heb. xii. experienced.

7. An

7. An everlasting portion, Psal lxxiii. 26. Though mens portion in the world neither be taken from them, nor wasted by them; yet it will last no longer with them than the dying-hour. When the breath is out, it is no more theirs; it becomes the portion of others after them. But death takes not away the believer's portion: therefore is the phrase "Lay up for yourselves," Matth vi 20. He will be the believer's portion in time and throughout eternity. And hence it follows, that he is.

8 *Lastly*, A nonsuch portion, the best of portions, the most desirable portion: no portion comparable to him, Jer. x 15, 16. "They are vanity, and the work of errors: In the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance; the Lord of hosts is his name." Psal. xvii. 14, 15 And so the believer reckons all but loss and dung in comparison of a God in Christ, Phil iii 8 So the world's portion being put in competition with Christ and his heavy cross, the Lord's people have rejoiced in their portion in the midst of the most cruel sufferings, and would not have exchanged their portion with their persecutors fulness and ease

II. The next general head is to shew in what respects God in Christ is the portion of his people, or the portion of those who have taken him for their refuge.

1. They have and possess him as their portion in virtue of the covenant of grace, which is the disposition they have to it, Heb. viii. 10. Being brought within the covenant, they are secured in this which is the portion of God's covenant-people, his children and heirs. Others have the offer and grant of this portion, but they are actually possessed of it.

2. They desire him above all for their portion, Psal. lxxiii. 25. often cited. They have seen the vanity and

and emptiness of created things for a portion, Psal. xxvii. 14. the fulness and sufficiency of God in Christ; and therefore their desires terminate in him for a portion, John xiv. 8. Psal xxvii. 4. They desire him only, wholly, and for ever. And so he is called their *desire*, Hag. ii. 7. all their desires of a portion centering in him.

3. They chuse him for their portion. When the two parts into which the all is divided, are set before them, and they are bid chuse, their souls take hold of a God in Christ, and say, *Thou art my portion*; I will take thee as my portion and inheritance before all the world, Josh. xxiv. 15. They halt not, as many, betwixt two opinions: they are determined, they are brought to a point; he is their choice.

4 They claim him as their portion, Lam. iii. 24. *Thou art my portion, saith my soul.* Their souls say with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God.* It is the proper work of faith to claim him as theirs God insists on this, that they should claim him, Jer iii. 4 "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" He promises that they shall claim him, ver 19. *I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father.* And the Spirit of Christ in them causes them to claim him, Rom. viii. 15. "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Gal iv. 6. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" According to the measure of their faith, so is their claim, strong or weak, clear or unclear: but where-ever faith is, it doth claim God in Christ as theirs. Doubts and darkness may indeed so overcloud the believer, that he cannot perceive his claiming God in Christ as his, it is like a pulse so weak that it can hardly be felt: yea, he may be at that, that he says, he has no claim to him as his, that he dare not, cannot claim him as his God or portion: and yet bid him in that case quit his claim; he would not do it for a thou-

ſand worlds: which argues that he hath a real claim, though to him as it were imperceptible.

5. *Laſtly*, They reſt in him as their portion, Heb. iv. 3 *We which have believed, do enter into reſt.* Their poor hungry ſouls have been ſeeking a portion to live on. While they ſought among the creatures for it, they could find nothing to reſt in as a portion: but a diſcovery of God in Chriſt being made to them, and they apprehending him by faith, their ſouls ſay within them now *This is my reſt.* They are like *the merchant-man, ſeeking goodly pearls: who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and ſold all that he had, and bought it*, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. They ſee that there is a fulneſs in him to ſatisfy their ſouls, to anſwer all their needs, and ſupply all their wants: ſo they reſt in him as their portion.

III. I proceed now to confirm the doctrine. It appears from,

1. The nature of God, particularly his all-ſufficiency and goodneſs. There is enough in him for all that ſinners ſtand in need of: ſo he needs not ſend them for their proviſion to another quarter. He is good, infinitely good; and therefore ready to communicate of his ſufficiency to his own, Pſal. cxix. 68. *Thou art good, and doſt good*; and will not ſend them to another. And ſo it is indeed, Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. *The Lord God is a ſun and ſhield*; a ſhield for protection, and a ſun for proviſion.

2. The nature of the covenant, which is for proviſion as well as protection of thoſe who come into it. The leading promiſe of the covenant, Heb. viii. 10: *I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people*, imports the one as well as the other. And ſo both are promiſed together, Pſal. lxxxiv. 11 juſt quoted. God's covenant is not like the treacherous covenant the Duke of Alva made with ſome, to whom he promiſed them their life, but afterwards ſtarved them, pretending he had not promiſed them meat

meat too. No; *I say unto you,* says Christ, *Take no thought (i. e.* anxious or perplexing thought) *for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?* Matth. vi. 25. It is a full covenant wherein all is secured to believers, Rev. xxi. 7. *He that overcometh shall inherit all things.* It is a covenant of service, and masters give provision as well as protection to their servants; a marriage-covenant, and the husband, if he be able, will surely maintain his own wife

3. The nature of faith, which is the soul's going to God in Christ for rest; and that not only for rest to the conscience, under the covert of blood as a refuge; but for rest to the heart, in an all-sufficient God as a portion, Matth xi. 28. This last as well as the former is the errand faith goes to God in Christ upon: and doubtless it cannot come amiss, for it obtains all, that being the constant rule of the dispensation of grace, *According to thy faith be it unto thee.*

4. The honour of God requires it, Heb xi 16. *God is not ashamed to be called their God.* Believers go to him and trust in him for all, and it lies upon the honour of God to provide for them, as well as to protect them. Hath he said, "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an Infidel," 1 Tim. v. 8. and will he not see to the protection of his own family? Is it not a dishonour to any man of ability, to have his spouse or children hanging on about the hand of strangers, for something to live on? So it reflects dishonour on God, that his people hang on so about the world's door: and we may be sure they need not do it, John iv 14.

5. The comfort and happiness of believers require it. It is not possible they can be provided otherwise with a portion on which they may live, John vi. 68. *Lord,* said Peter, *to whom shall we go? thou hast*

*the words of eternal life.* Though while they lived in their natural state, they could like the prodigal feed on husks like the swine; yet their new nature cannot now relish such entertainment. Hence proceed those breathings of the new nature in them, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, Psal lxiii. 1." And these desires are of the Lord's own kindling, and therefore he cannot but satisfy them, by being a portion to them himself. May not the whole creation say to the soul in these breathings, as 2 Kings vi. 27. *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?*

6 *Lastly,* The duty of believers supposes it. It is their duty to live on a God in Christ as their portion, Isa. lv. 2. *Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.* This very thing is the life of faith, which is the great thing God requires of his people. Hence Paul says, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. Compare John vi. 27, 29. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." It is their privilege, ver. 57. *He that eateth me, even he shall live by me:* and consequently their duty to live by him. They ought to live on him, and lay all their wants upon him, Psal lv 22. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.* Consequently he is their portion to live upon. He takes it ill at their hands, that they seek to any other for supply; this says, they are welcome to him.

I come now to the practical improvement of this comfortable subject, which I shall discuss in a threefold use, namely, of information, trial, and exhortation.

Use

USE I. of information. Hence we may learn,

1 The happiness of believers. They have in a God in Christ what makes them happy persons indeed. There are but two things necessary to make a guilty creature happy, namely, suitable protection and provision. The first removes evil from them, the last furnishes them with necessary good. In God the believer has both; for he is both a refuge to them, and a portion in that refuge. Wherefore we may conclude, as Psal. ii. *ult. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

2. The unhappiness of believers They are poor portionless creatures, whatever they enjoy in the world; for any portion they have, is not worth the name. It is but a creature-portion, and that will be but a time-portion; it will neither satisfy, nor will it last with them. And therefore the Spirit of God speaks very diminutively of it, Prov. xxiii 5. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle towards heaven" Matth xiii. 12. *Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath.* God is not their portion, for he is not their refuge: they have not a God to live upon as their God, since they are not by faith seated under his shadow.

3. Justification and sanctification are inseparable; for to whom God is a refuge he is also a portion. Faith takes God in Christ for a refuge, and so the soul is justified, Rom. viii. 1. *There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* It takes him for a portion, and so the soul is sanctified, Eph. ii 20, 21. "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Think not that ye shall separate what God has so closely joined. Ye that are unholy in your lives, may assure yourselves that your sins are not pardoned. The reigning power of sin in you may assure you, that it

has yet its condemning power over you. If the guilt of it were taken away, the reigning power of it would be broken. Alas! how do men deceive themselves! They will be called by Christ's name; but they will eat their own bread. They will pretend to make Christ the rest of their consciences, while their hearts cannot rest in him, but in their lusts. But water as well as blood came out of Christ's pierced side: and if ye be sprinkled with the blood to the remission of your sin, ye are sprinkled with the water too, for the sanctification of your hearts and lives.

4. However, justification in the order of nature goes before sanctification. First, God is the sinner's refuge, and then he becomes his portion, Rom. iv. 5 "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Whosoever then would be made holy, and would attain to true evangelical repentance, which is the top branch of true holiness, and the compend of all good works, must seek to be justified by faith in order thereunto. For till once the curse be taken off the soul in justification, how is it possible it should bring forth any good fruit? How can God become the portion of the sinner, till once he is become his refuge? A legal repentance may and doth go before the remission of sin as to the guilt of eternal wrath; but true gospel-repentance follows it, and that inseparably, Luke vii. 47. *Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.*

5. Believers are so set up with a portion, that they cannot break. Since God himself is their portion, they can never be poor; they will have enough in the worst of times, Psal. xxiii. 1. *The Lord is my shepherd*, says David, *I shall not want.* The believer's portion is not like that of the world, consisting of moveables, which may be taken from them; but it is *a kingdom which cannot be moved*, Heb xii 28. The Chaldeans and Sabeans took away Job's cattle, but not his God and portion; and therefore he could say after

after all his sad losses. *Is not my help in me?* Job vi. 13. The believer is like the landed man; though robbers take away his money, they cannot take away his land too: though a flood sweep away the crop, yet it leaves his ground still; so that he has whereon to live. Hence an eminent said, "Although the fig-tree shall "not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the "labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield "no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and "there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice "in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation, "Hab. iii. 17, 18."

6. *Lastly*, God is all-sufficient. Who but one all-sufficient could be a portion to all that flee into the great Refuge? How great must that portion be, which all the saints from Adam have lived, and shall live upon, to the last that shall be in the world; and that not only for time, but for eternity? They shall all be heirs-portioners, and all shall have enough. This world is but a sorry portion; one generation must go, that another may come, and enjoy it: for it cannot serve all together, as God in Christ can do.

USE II. of trial. Hereby ye may try whether ye be within the precincts, bounds, and protection of the great Refuge, or not; that is, in effect, whether ye be in Christ, or out of Christ; whether in a state of salvation or of condemnation? This is a point of great weight, and it nearly concerns you to know, where you are, whether ye are yet got within the liberties of the refuge, or yet without them. And I would offer some motives to press you to put this to a trial.

*Mot.* 1. Life and death hang upon this point, Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Your eternal salvation or damnation depend upon it. All that are within the precincts of this refuge are safe; death cannot come over the line: all that are without them are in the utmost hazard of eternal destruction every moment,

moment, Pſal. vii. 12. *If he turn not, he will whet his ſword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.* There is no ſafety there; for it is the dominion of death, in which no man can be ſafe.

*Mot.* 2. There are ſeveral particular differences betwixt the ſtate of them that are within, and of thoſe that are without this refuge; and theſe differences are great and weighty. I will lay them before you in theſe five points.

1. In the matter of ſin: there is no ſafety from it without this refuge. If you be not within this refuge, ſin has all its power over you. It has a reigning power in you, ſo that do what ye will, ye can do nothing but ſin, and cannot pleaſe God, Rom. viii. 8. *They that are in the fleſh, cannot pleaſe God.* John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* Ye may wreſtle againſt it as you will, but ye will never get victory over it, for that is got only within the refuge, 1 Cor. xv. 57. *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Sin has a condemning power over you, it is armed with its ſting againſt you, and keeps you under the guilt of eternal wrath, John iii. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already.* So it preys on you, as death on the carcaſe.—But if ye be within the refuge, ſin's dominion is broken unto you, Rom. vi. 14. *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* And though it yet dwell in you, it ſhall never recover the dominion, but, like the houſe of Saul, grow weaker and weaker. And it cannot condemn you, more than the fire could burn the three children: for *there is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. viii. 1. Our Lord Chriſt felt the condemning power of ſin as a public perſon, and ſo it can never repeat its ſentence on thoſe who are in him.

2. In the matter of the law as a covenant of works. It extends its dominion over all to the very border of the refuge: ſo all that are within the refuge are free from

from it, but all that are without are under it, Rom. vi. 14. So if ye be without, ye are under the covenant of works, which exacts obedience of you every way perfect, under the pain of the curse; and whatever comes short of perfection in your obedience is rejected. So that when ye have done all you can, and the best you can; yet you and your works are all rejected of God because your works are not perfect In the dominion ye live in, less is not accepted. But if ye be within the refuge, ye are under the covenant of grace, where obedience, yea perfect obedience is indeed required, but not under pain of the curse, which Christ already has bore away from all who are in him. But sincere obedience is accepted, and God takes it kindly off their hands, though it is not perfect. for the sake of the Mediator's perfect obedience, which always appears within the refuge.

3. In the matter of the curse. All without the refuge are under the curse, by the sentence of the law bound over to the revenging wrath of God, Gal. iii. 10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all "things which are written in the book of the law to do "them. Rom. iii. 19. What things soever the law "saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may "become guilty before God." But all within the refuge are freed from the curse, Gal. iii. 13 *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*

4. In respect of Satan. All without the refuge are under his power, Acts xxvi. 18. They are his captives, prisoners, servants or slaves, and members of the kingdom of darkness. But they that are within the refuge, are set free from the power of that enemy, Col. i. 13. and reign in life through Jesus Christ.

5. *Lastly*, In the matter of death To all without the refuge death is armed with its sting; but to those that are within it, it can do them no real harm, 1 Cor. xv 57. already quoted.

*Mot.* 3. All of us are born without the refuge, being *children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. None enter within it but those who are born again. If ye be living then in the state ye were born in, ye are without the refuge, and so in the miserable case ye have heard of.

*Mot.* 4. Sinners when once awakened see that there is no living without the refuge. Hence Peter's hearers, when pricked in their heart, cried out, *What shall we do?* Acts ii. 37. No man could contentedly live in that case one moment, if he saw his danger.

*Mot. last.* Many miss the entry into the refuge who seem to aim at it, Luke xiii. 24. and so seem to themselves and others to be in, while they really are out.

Now ye may know if the Lord be your refuge by this: If the Lord be your portion to live on, he is your refuge. If ye have taken God in Christ for your refuge, ye have also taken him for your portion to live on. And whether God in Christ be your portion or not, ye may know by these marks.

*Mark* 1. Ye will have a transcendent esteem of and value for him, and love of him above all. He will have the highest seat in your judgement and practical understanding, in your heart, and in your affections, Luke xiv. 26. Propriety in a thing raises the value for it. A man will have a greater value for, and liking of his own cottage, than another man's castle. Hence the world is the chief in the minds and hearts of worldly men; they love the world, and the things that are in the world, 1 John ii. 15. But God in Christ is chief with the saints. The great pleasure of the former lies in their appropriating the things of the world: so the worldly man has his great pleasure in earthly *My's*, Hos. ii. 5. "She said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink." Dan. iv. 30. "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of

of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" The great pleasure of the latter lies in appropriating God in in Christ: so they have their greatest pleasure in spiritual and heavenly *My's*, as Psal. xviii 2 "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

2. Ye will be so disposed as to be satisfied in the enjoyment of God in Christ, even in the want of other things, Hab. iii. 17, 18. forecited. This is the rest of the soul in God as a portion, Psal. lxxiii. 25 "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee" Men who have the world for their portion, are very easy in the want of the enjoyment of God; they reign as kings without him, and rejoice in their portion. And the saints give worldly men the peel of that, being easy in the enjoyment of God, under the want of those things that wordly men set their hearts on, Gal. vi 14. "God forbid, says the apostle, that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" Though alas! worldly men being altogether flesh and the saints being spiritual but in part, the latter cannot get up to the measure of the former, to care quite as little for the world as they do for God.

3. Ye will not be content with any thing without him, Psal. lxiii 1. "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." No less than a God can afford a rest to the gracious soul: nothing can fill up his room to those whose portion he is. Carnal men whose portion is the creature, take their creature-portion from them, and they cry out, *What have I more?* Judg. xviii. 24. If their worldly enjoyments go, the pillow is taken quite from under their head, and they cannot be content even with a God without them, Exod. v. 7, 8, 9.

Esau

Esau says, Gen. xxv. 32. "Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birth-right do to me?" And if God go, the pillow is taken from under the saint's head, and all the world cannot make him a bed, where he can lie easy: but still he cries, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Psal. xxii 1

*Object.* But may not a gracious soul sometimes be very easy, even when the Lord is departed from him?

*Answ.* It is true it may be so, when they are spiritually asleep: but yet they are never so fast asleep, but they have some uneasiness on that head, as the spouse had, Cant. v. 2. *I sleep, but my heart waketh* And there is still a secret discontent in the soul with all things while he is away. And they will not lie always still in that case, but will awake, and clearly shew that nothing without a God can content them, Cant. iii. 1. *&c.*

4. He will be your chief concern, Matth. vi. 21. *Where your treasure is*, says our Lord, *there will your heart be also.* Whatever it be that a man takes for his portion, he will be mainly taken up about that. Men that have their portion in this life, the things of this life are their main business; these get their sleeping and waking thoughts: all things else must yield thereto, and what concerns their souls is dragged at the heels of these things: and is cut and carved as may best consist with the advancing of them. And men whose portion the Lord is, it is their main business to enjoy him; as David witnesseth, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple," Psal. xxvii. 4 It is their greatest care to obtain his favour, for Psal. xxx. 5. *In his favour is life.* And all other things must yield thereto, Phil iii. 8. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for

for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ."

5. It will be your great desire, and sincere endeavour, to be like him, 1 John iii. 3. Men generally look like their portion. It is known upon them, whether they have a small and poor portion, or a great and fat portion. And they that have God for their portion, will be like him in holiness, and it will be their desire and endeavour to be more and more like him, in all his imitable perfections, 2 Cor. iii 18. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and gave us a copy of holiness and righteousness, love and beneficence to mankind, meekness, patience, *&c.* and his people will follow these.

6. It will be your great design to please him in all things, by having respect unto all his commandments, Psal. cxix 6. She that is married takes the husband instead of all others, leaving father and mother for him; and so labours how to please her husband. And they that take God for their portion instead of all others, will be careful to please him, and walk by his direction in all things, Psal. xlv. 10 His will, will be not only the rule, but the reason of duty to them: and what is his pleasure they will not willingly break. He is their portion, and so their all. And so their obedience is illimited.

7. *Lastly*, It will be upon his own that ye will serve him, Gal. ii. 20. *I live*, says the apostle, *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Phil. iv. 13 *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* Hypocrites never take God for their portion; they seem to themselves to have of their own; and upon that they serve him, leaning to their own abilities, like hired servants. But the saints, convinced they have nothing of their own, live on him as their portion, depending on him for strength, throughbearing, *&c.* in duties. Matth. v. 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

USE III of exhortation; and that to those who have made God in Christ their refuge, and to those who are without a saving interest in him.

*First*, Ye who profess to have made God in Christ your refuge, carry as becomes those who have in him a portion to live on. And,

1. Hang not on about the door of the world and the lusts thereof, for satisfaction, as those who have no other portion but what they can squeeze out of these dry and sulsome breasts, John iv 14. Leave the husks which the swine do eat, to those poor prodigals that are not come home to their Father's house. Ye have bread enough there. That contentment which others seek in these ye may have in God.

2. If the world smile on you, let it not have your heart, since it is not your portion, Psal lxii. 10 "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Carry your heart lightly over time-enjoyments, and let it not dip in them. Though these are carnal mens good things, they are not thy good things, Luke xvi 25. Thy portion is in thy refuge.

3. If the world frown, bear it with holy courage. Whatever thou lose, thou canst not lose thy portion, which is in thy refuge. Alas! it is sad to think that believers should appear in that case as if all were gone, since they never want a portion

*Secondly*, Ye who want a saving interest in Christ as your refuge, seek to get God in Christ for your portion. For motives, consider,

1. Nothing less can be a sufficient portion for you. Increase your portion in the world, as ye will, ye will still be in want, while God is not your portion. But in him your souls shall find complete satisfaction.

2. Any other portion may be lost. They that have not a God to live on, may soon be at that they shall have nothing at all to live on. But if God be your portion, ye shall never want

3. What but a God in Christ can be a portion to you at death, at the judgment-day, and through eternity?

nity! All things will leave you at death, and you can carry nothing with you into the other world. What portion then can you have, if God is not your portion now?

5. If God be not your portion here, ye will have a dreadful portion in the other world. God will then cut you asunder, and appoint you your portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matth. xxiv *ult.* Remember what Abraham said to the rich man, Luke xvi 25. "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

5. *Lastly*, God in Christ is now offering himself as a portion unto you; and ye may have this enriching portion. Your work now is to embrace the offer, and close the bargain.

(1.) Guilty creatures, take a God in Christ for your refuge; so shall ye be well provided for safety against the law, sin, death, and hell.

(2.) Poor portionless creatures, take God in Christ for your portion. Renounce all other portions, and take him for your portion for time and eternity. So shall you be provided happily from this time and for ever.

THE

# Distinguishing Characters OF TRUE BELIEVERS.

II. In relation to their Disposition and Practice, as Citizens of Zion *.

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## The Citizen of Zion described.

PSALM XV. 1.

*Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*

THIS psalm consists of a question and an answer. The former we have, ver. 1. the latter, ver. 2. to the end.

In the question may be considered,

1. The party propounding it; *David*, for it is a psalm of his. He was a good man, concerned for his own soul. And therefore he proposes it for his own behoof, to impress his own soul with the necessity of his answering the character of a citizen of Zion. He was a prophet, concerned for the souls of others: therefore he proposes it for their behoof, to impress men with the necessity of their answering that character.

2. The

* This subject, consisting of several sermons, was delivered at Berwick in February and March 1713.

2. The party to whom it is propounded; it is to the *Lord* himself. He is the infallible Teacher, and the sovereign Lawgiver, who has settled the constitutions of his own kingdom; from whom therefore we must learn them, that we may conform ourselves thereto.

3. The question itself, propounded in Old testament terms. The *tabernacle* was that tent which God set up among them, and where he met with his people before the building of the temple. It was a moveable place; therefore one is said to *abide* or sojourn there. The *holy hill* is mount Zion, Psal. ii. 6. comprehending the hill on which the temple was built afterwards by Solomon. That was a fixed habitation, therefore one is said to *dwell* there.

There are two parts of this question; and in New-testament language they are these.

(1.) Who shall be lodgers in God's lower house on earth, whom he will own as members of his family, and of the church militant, whom he will entertain with and admit to communion with himself in ordinances. There are many who call themselves of the holy city, and of his family, who flock about his tabernacle, whom he will disown as none of his, and so are strangers to the tabernacle-entertainment.

(2.) Who shall be dwellers in his upper house, inhabitants of heaven, and pillars in the temple of God. There are many who will never come there. O, who are they who will be taken within the gates of the holy city, while others as unclean lepers are shut out? Who are they, as if he had said, that I may strive to be one of them?

4. The order of the question; (1) The sojourning in the lower; and then, (2.) The dwelling in the upper house; intimating that one must first abide in the tabernacle below, before he can be admitted to the holy hill above.

The doctrine natively arising from the words is as follows, *viz.*

DOCT. *It challengeth every one's most solemn and serious consideration, what sort of persons, sojourning with God here, shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter.*

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew what is implied in this object of our solemn and serious consideration.

II. Give the reasons of the doctrine.

III. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to shew what is implied in this object of our solemn and serious consideration.

FIRST, All shall not be inhabitants of heaven: some will perish, and drop out of this earth into eternal darkness.

1. All the sons of men will not be saints in heaven. There will be a great company on Christ's left hand at the great day, doomed to everlasting fire, Matth. xxv. 41. Many of Adam's family will be lost for ever, as well as there are many of the angelical tribe lost. There are vessels of iniquity now, who will be vessels of wrath for ever fitted for destruction. They may have pleasant spots of earth and large portions of it, who will have no place in heaven.

2. Many of those who are now about the tabernacle, will be assisting in heaven. Many members of the visible church are dead and rotten members, who will be cut off, and cast over the hedge, Matth. vii. 21, 22, 23. "Not every one that saith unto me, "Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: "but he that doth the will of my Father which is in hea-"ven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, "have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name "have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wo-"derful work? And then will I profess unto them, I "never knew you: depart from me, ye that work ini-"quity." Luke xiii. 26, 27. "Then shall ye begin to "say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and "thou

"thou haſt taught in our ſtreets. But he ſhall ſay, I "tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart "from me, all ye workers of iniquity." To ſee thoſe fall ſhort of heaven, who never had the tabernacle of God among them, is not ſtrange: but many who in external privileges have been exalted to heaven, will be brought down to hell, Pſal. cxxv. *ult.*

SECONDLY, They are perſons of a diſtinguiſhed character now, who ſhall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter.

1. They are not of the common gang of the world, "walking according to the courſe of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience." Eph. ii. 2. The courſe of this world is the courſe of the multitude, and the multitude is on the road to deſtruction. Hence ſays our Lord, "Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat: becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," Matth. vii 13, 14. They are nonconformiſts to the world, who are content to be the world's wonder, Zech. iii. 8. not daring for their ſouls to venture on ſuch practices as, being contrary to the law of God, others make no bones of, 1 Pet. iv. 4.

2. They are not of the common gang of profeſſors neither, Matth. xxv. 2, 3, 4. Many profeſſors are foolish virgins, that will get heaven's door caſt in their face. They carry as if they had found out the ſecret of making concord betwixt Chriſt and Belial, of reconciling the law to their luſts, of a broad and eaſy way to heaven, wherein men may carry the cloak of religion, and need not put off the old man. Thoſe who ſhall be inhabitants of heaven are not ſo, Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4. "Who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord? and who ſhall ſtand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his ſoul unto vanity, nor ſworn deceitfully."

3. Much

3. Much leſs are they ſuch as are of a diſtinguiſhed character for wickedneſs, worſe than the ordinary gang either of the world or of profeſſors, Pſal. i. 1. "Bleſſed is the man that walketh not in the counſel of the ungodly, nor ſtandeth in the way of ſinners, nor ſitteth in the ſeat of the ſcornful." There are many who diſtinguiſh themſelves from others, by their looſe ſpeaking, lying, ſwearing, *&c.* their looſe living in reveilling, drunkenneſs, filthineſs, injuſtice in their dealings, *&c.* Theſe may expect a diſtinguiſhed place in hell, but none in heaven if they repent not.

Now, that they are perſons of a diſtinguiſhed character now, who ſhall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter, appears,

1. None but ſuch have a right or title to heaven, Matth. xxv. 34. "Then ſhall the king ſay unto them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And however men may get poſſeſſions on earth, by force, fraud, and injuſtice, without a juſt right thereto; there is no ſuch purchaſe to be made of heaven, or in it. Hence the apoſtle ſays, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous judge ſhall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing." 2 Tim. iv. 8 "And if a man ſtrive for maſteries, yet is he not crowned, except he ſtrive lawfully," chap. ii. 5. How can ye think to be inhabitants of heaven, that walk like the common gang of the world? Where is your title to it? Ye will ſay, ye have a title by faith, ye believe in Chriſt. If it be ſo, your title cannot be denied. But it is a demand that ye will not get refuſed, *Shew your faith by your works.* A man may ſay he has faith, who has not works, but he cannot have faith without works, James ii 14. By faith a man gets a right to heaven, but it is holineſs of heart and life that is the evidence of that right. Hence ſays our Lord, "Bleſſed are they that do his commandments, that they may have

have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city," Rev. xxii. 14.

2. None but such are meet for it, and none come there, who are not made meet for it before they come. Hence the apostle *gives thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, Col. i. 12. Every one is in this world made meet for their place in the other world. God makes his chosen ones meet for heaven, and the reprobates themselves for hell, Rom. ix. 22. And none but those of a distinguished character are,

(1.) Meet for the journey to heaven. It is the hill of God, and it is not every one that is fit for going up that hill. The way to heaven lies upward, the way to hell is downward; therefore the latter is easy, and many chuse it; the former is difficult, and none but those of a peculiar character and disposition have a heart for it. Hence the Lord says of Caleb, Numb. xiv. 24. "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully; him will I bring into the land, whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."

(2.) Meet for heaven itself. It is a holy hill; and all is holy there. It is just the reverse of the unholy world, and the unholy heart: and if a man with an unrenewed nature and heart could possibly be let in there, he would think he were all wrong, and he would leave the holy God, angels, saints, pleasures, and the place, and down again to the beloved world, where he would get company, profits, pleasures, &c. suitable to his mind. He would exchange the rivers of pleasures for the pleasures of the flesh and the world.

THIRDLY, In this world they sojourn with God in his tabernacle, who shall be inhabitants of heaven in the world to come.

Here I shall shew,

1. What that sojourning is.
2. Why those who sojourn with God in his taber-

nacle

nacle, shall be inhabitants of heaven in the world t
come.

*First*, I am to shew what that sojourning with Go
in his tabernacle is. It imports the following things.

1. The world is no more their home; they look o
themselves as pilgrims and strangers on earth, and the
head is homeward toward heaven. Hence the apost
speaking of some of the Old-Testament worthies, say
'These all died in faith, not having received the prom
'ses, but having seen them afar off, and were persuad
'ed of them, and embraced them, and confessed th
'they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Fo
'they that say such things, declare plainly that the
'seek a country. And truly if they had been mindfu
'of that country, from whence they came out, the
'might have had opportunity to have returned: bu
'now they desire a better country, that is, an heaven
'ly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called the
'God: for he hath prepared for them a city,' Heb. x
13—16. They are brought out of the house of bon
dage, and are on their wilderness journey through th
world, Cant viii. 5.; and the best conveniency the
have by the way is not the tents of sin, but the tabern
cle of God. There they draw water out of the wel
of salvation, while going through the valley of Baca.

2. They are in a peculiar manner consecrated t
God and his service, presenting their bodies living sa
crifices, holy, acceptable unto God, which is thei
reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. All Israel had acce
to the outer court of the tabernacle, but the priest
only to the tabernacle itself, as consecrated to God i
a peculiar manner. While others are externally conse
crated to God by baptism and the Lord's supper, the
are all made *priests to God*, Rev. i. 6.; they are
*royal priesthood*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. who shall be members o
the general assembly of the first-born. They are mad
so in their conversion.

3. They are admitted to communion with God in
ordinances public, private, and secret, and by taber
nacle

acle-communion with him are fitted for temple-communion with him above. Hence the Lord says, "O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Micah ii. 7. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," Isa. xii. 3. "If a man love me, says Christ, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 23. The worshippers in the outer court only will get their eternal abode without among the dogs, sorcerers, &c.: but they that shall be inhabitants of heaven, come farther in, even into the tabernacle itself: their souls are fed at his table, they find the smell of his garments as of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; and if they miss it at any time, it is the grief of their souls, and they are never at rest till they recover it again.

*Secondly*, I am to shew, why it is that those who in this world sojourn with God in his tabernacle, shall be inhabitants of heaven in the world to come.

1. They are born from above there. It is the waters of the sanctuary that the Spirit moves for the regeneration of those who are born of the Spirit. The word is the seed whereof the new creature is formed, 1 Pet. i. 23. Where God has a design of love on a people, he sets up his tabernacle among them, and gives his presence with ordinances for their conviction and conversion. "And of Zion it shall be said, This man and that man was born in her," Psal. lxxxvii. 5. And so it is natural for them to breathe in that air.

2. They are made meet for heaven there, Eph iv. 11, 12. They are nourished there unto eternal life; though those who remain dead in their sins receive nothing from ordinances but food to their lusts, whereby they grow worse and worse; those that are born for heaven, are nursed up for it in ordinances. There the bride the Lamb's wife makes herself ready for

for the consummation of the marriage; there she get the pledges of the Lord's love, his love-visits and love tokens, till she be brought home; and there the travellers are refreshed for their journey, Cant. iv 6.

3 From thence are they transported to heaven, as the Israelites from the wilderness to Canaan. The tabernacle is the nursery of grace, whence the trees of righteousness are transplanted into the garden of glory. It is the lower room of the house of God, from whence at death they are brought up to the higher rooms and mansions And whoso sojourn not with God in the tabernacle below, shall never dwell with him in heaven.

II The next general head is to assign the reasons of the doctrine, or why every one should seriously and solemnly consider what sort of persons, sojourning with God here, shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter.

1. Because there is a heaven and hell, and every one must land in the one or the other at length. Sure the very being of a heaven and hell, being made known to us in the word, leaves men without excuse for the careless unthinking life they lead. Our being concerned in them challenges our consideration, since we are not as the beasts which being dead are done: and the weight and importance of them to us challenges the most solemn and serious consideration.

2. Because the laws of heaven admit only such and such persons as are so and so qualified into it, and adjudge others to be excluded for ever from it, John iii. 3. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Heb. xii. 14. 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. forecited And therefore the apostle tells us, that 'if we live after the flesh, we shall die; but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live,' Rom. viii. 13. See Rev. xxi *ult* 'There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh

worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.' This is a good reason for our most serious consideration of the matter.

3. Because none who are capable of consideration, will ever see heaven without it. The work of grace begins there, Lam iii. 40. 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.' People may go rambling through the world at all adventures, they may go dreaming through it without serious thoughts of eternity, and land in the pit: but none will get to heaven either of these ways.

4. *Lastly*, Because if we miss of heaven, we are ruined eternally. Eternal salvation and damnation lie at stake: and if these cannot obtain solemn serious thoughts of us, our case is very desperate.

I come now to the application of this subject. And I exhort all of you solemnly, and seriously to consider, what sort of persons shall be inhabitants of heaven. Take this matter to heart, and bestow some thoughts upon it. And,

1. Consider of it solemnly, fixedly, and deliberately: *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways*, Hag. i. 5. You consider of other things deliberately and fixedly; why will you allow your soul-concerns only some passing thoughts by the by?

2. Consider of it with application to yourselves, Job v. *ult.* "Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good. Prov ix. 12. If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself." Do this, that so you may see whither you yourselves be of that sort, that are in the road to heaven, or not.

3. Consider of it practically, that you may set yourselves to thrust in among those that so run as they may obtain, so strive as they may enter, and use such violence as they may take it by force.

4. *Lastly*, Consider of it divinely, as sitting your souls before the Lord to understand it of himself by

his word. If you take the verdict of the world, or of your own hearts in the matter, ye will deceive yourselves; for so many are thought to get to heaven, that will not be found there. For motives to press this, consider,

*Mot.* 1. Heaven is not peopled but with chosen people, 2 Cor. vi 17, 18. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Hell receives all comers, but many are sent off from the gates of heaven, and refused access. Hence says our Lord, Luke xiii. 25. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are." None can come to heaven, but,

1. Sealed ones, such as God has marked for himself, 2 Tim. ii. 19 "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." They are sealed in the hidden man of the heart, with the privy seal of the Spirit, Eph. i. 13.—*Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.* God's own image is stamped on them, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. In the day of their conversion, the Lord puts his seal on them, and says, 'They shall be mine in the day that I make up my jewels.' They are sealed in the forehead, Rev. vii 3 and xiv. 1. They look like him in the outward man, and walk as he walked, labouring to follow him, John x. 27.

2 Separated ones, separated from the world lying in wickedness, 2 Cor vi. 17. forecited. They are separated from among the rest in this life, by the work of God on their souls, convincing, illuminating, and renewing them, and bringing them away to Christ. Grace selects them out now from among the rest of mankind,

kind, 1 Cor. vi. 11. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Eph. ii. 2. In time past ye walked according to the course of this world," &c. They will be separated after this life, Matth. xxv. 32. "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats;" and that will be a clean'y separation, not only in respect of manner of life, but of place.

*Mot.* 2. The most part will be found refuse, Matth. xxii. 14. "For many are called, but few are chosen." Christ's flock is but a very little flock, in comparison of the devil's drove, Luke xii. 32. The former are few, but the latter many, Matth. vii. 13, 14. The gospel net has about it, the bad to be cast away, as well as the good to be gathered into vessels, Matth. xiii. 47. And since the most part will be cast out, should not each of us be saying, *Master, is it I?*

*Mot.* 3. Consider it is not easy to get to heaven, Matth. vii. 14. "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Luke xiii. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." It is a business of the greatest difficulty to get up to the holy hill. Many have seemed to have been set fair on the way to it, who have miserably fallen short. The Israelites in the wilderness were an emblem of this, Heb. iv. 1. Nay, they that do get there, have a great pinch in getting forward, 1 Pet. iv. 18. *The righteous are scarcely saved.* There is all reason for the utmost diligence and circumspection, according to the apostle's exhortation, Phil. ii. 12. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* Our work is great, our strength small, our enemies are many, and their opposition is great: these require striving, wrestling, fighting, using violence, &c.

*Lastly*, It is not a matter to be careless and indifferent about, whether we shall get there or no.

There are two things about it, that may move us to the deepeſt concern. (1) The greatneſs of the happineſs or miſery that is before us. No tongue can expreſs, nay nor heart conceive, the happineſs of heaven, and the miſery in hell. The one is ſhadowed out to us by the beſt things here, the other by the worſt; but as heaven is better than the beſt here, hell is worſe than the worſt. (2.) The eternity of that happineſs or miſery. That is it that accents the joys and praiſes in heaven, and the wo and ſhriekings of the damned. Happineſs without end, miſery without end, are happineſs and miſery in perfection.

What may help you in this inquiry, as to your own ſtate, is the matter of communion with God here in his tabernacle of ordinances. Of which you may obſerve the three following things.

1. That is our eſſay-piece for heaven: they whom God admits to communion with him in ordinances, he will never debar from communion with him in heaven: and they that never get communion with him in the lower houſe, being capable of it, will never get it in heaven.

2. The ſame kind of qualifications are neceſſary for the one as for the other. The anſwer to both queſtions is one.

3. *Laſtly*, Wherefore juſt as you were living in this world under ordinances, ſo may ye expect your lot in the other world.

Let theſe things move you therefore ſeriouſly to think on this important matter, and the Lord give you underſtanding in all things.

The

# The Citizen of Zion an upright Walker.

PSALM xv. 2.

*He that walketh uprightly.*——

THIS is the first character of one that shall be an inhabitant of heaven. It is taken from his *walk*, that is, his habitual and ordinary course of life. Mens walk in this world is the sign of the place and state they are making to in another world. His walk is *upright*; he is upright in heart and life; or perfect and entire, namely, in the way of gospel perfection.

The text affords this doctrine.

DOCT. *It is such as walk uprightly now, that shall dwell in heaven hereafter.*

In handling this doctrine, I shall,

I. Unfold this character of walking uprightly.

II Confirm the point, that such as walk uprightly now, shall dwell in heaven hereafter.

III. Apply the subject.

I. I shall unfold this character. He that shall dwell in heaven hereafter, walks uprightly now. And he that walks uprightly,

1. Is sincere in the frame and disposition of his heart. Hence prays the Psalmist, "Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts," Psal. cxxv. 4. There cannot be uprightness of life without uprightness of heart. If the cripple is made to go straight, his legs must have a new set; and if men be brought to walk uprightly, their hearts must get a new set by converting grace. An unsound heart will certainly make an unholy life,

agreeable to that, Pſal. lxxviii 37. "Their heart was not right with God, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant." All the religion of an unregenerate man is but hypocriſy, hateful to God and unprofitable to himſelf. God made man upright; and he loſt his uprightneſs. When God new-makes him, he makes him upright again; gives his heart a ſet and bent towards God and holineſs. So that the choice and deſire of his ſoul is conformity to the will of God in all things.

2. He walks entirely in the intereſts of religion. This is the walk of the man that is within the covenant, Gen. xvii. 1. *Walk before me, and be thou perfect.* It is the ſame word as in the text. He is evangelically perfect in parts, though not in degrees. The apoſtle explains it, Jam. i. 4. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." His religion conſiſts of *holineſs and righteouſneſs*, Luke i. 74. He is conſcientious and tender in his duty to God, and to his neighbour. Try him in the matters of piety, he is in the intereſts of religion there; try him in the matters of morality, he is in the ſame intereſts there: for he walks entirely and perfectly. Veſſels fitted for deſtruction, ſome of them chuſe the one half of religion, making painted hypocrites; others the other half, making mere moraliſts; others caſt off all ſhew of piety and morality too, making practical Atheiſts. The veſſels fitted for glory, chuſe, embrace, and walk in the whole of religion, piety, and morality.

3 He walks uniformly, his walk and religion is of a piece, Col iv 12 —— "that ye may ſtand perfect and complete in all the will of God." It was a piece of the Baptiſt's character, that he was conſiſtent with himſelf, not here and there according to the blowing of the wind, Luke vii. 24 Men may hide and diſcover their art as they pleaſe: but nature will out. They whoſe religion is artificial, are never uniform in it; there are always ſome things wherein they have

no

no uſe for it, but lay it aſide as what would mar the courſe of their corrupt nature. Hence many will be flaming hot in ſome opinion of religion, and key-cold in the duties of love to their neighbour; in their perſonal walk ſomething like Chriſtians, but in their relative duties diveſted of conſcience towards God; in the matters of God ſeeming to be ſomewhat, but in their dealings with men ſtart naught. But religion is made natural in ſome ſort to the veſſels of glory, namely, in reſpect of their new nature, and being natural will be of a piece.

4 He walks in the way of known duty univerſally, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, whoſe character is, that they 'walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs,' Luke i 6. Whereſoever he perceives God to call him, he follows, and ſo follows the Lord fully; not ſticking at, or willingly baulking any commanded duty. Such are they who are fitted for the upper Canaan, Numb. xiv. 24 It was David's character in oppoſition to Saul, that he would be univerſal in his obedience, Acts xiii. 22. 'I have found David,—a man after mine own heart, which ſhall fulfill all my will.' And Saul loſt the kingdom, but it was eſtabliſhed to David for ever. And it is always the characters of the veſſels fitted for deſtruction, whatever their attainments be, *One thing thou lackeſt*, Matth. x 21. Hence,

(1) He that walketh uprightly, will not walk on in groſs pollutions of the outward man: that cannot be univerſal obedience that has ſuch a ſeen groſs defect. Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4. "Who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord? and who ſhall ſtand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his ſoul unto vanity, nor ſworn deceitfully. Pſal. cxix. 1. Bleſſed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" The upright want not their ſpots, ſins of daily infirmity: but a courſe of wallowing in the mire of drunkenneſs, ſenſuality, filthineſs, ſwearing, lying, &c. I doubt if that be

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found the spot of God's people, 1 Cor. vi. 11. *And such were some of you*, says Paul to the Corinthians, that is fornicators, &c. verse 9. 10. *but ye are washed*, &c. Gal. v. 19. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness," &c.

(2.) He that walketh uprightly, will not allow himself in any known sin whatsoever, seen or unseen to the world. Hence David says, 'I was upright before him: and I kept myself from mine iniquity,' Psal. xviii 23. Such a bias of the heart and way as leads to the indulgence of any sin, speaks a heart parted between the Lord and lusts. The upright man is at odds with sin as sin, and therefore with all that is known to be sin.

5. He walks as under the eye of God. Hence said the Lord to Abraham, *Walk before me*, Gen. xvii. 1. And says David, *I have set the Lord always before me*, Psal. xvi. 8. Knowing him to be his witness in all things, and believing his omniscience with application, he studies to approve himself unto God. "Our rejoicing is this, says the apostle, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world," 2 Cor. i. 12 There is a spice of Atheism in hypocrisy. The careless sinner forgets God, and minds not that the eye of God is upon him: the presumptuous sinner, if he can carry the matter securely as to the world's part, stands not on the Lord's knowledge of his crime, Psal. xxxvi. 1. "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." But the upright man deals with God, as if the eyes of all men were on him; and with men, as knowing that the eye of God is upon him. And his main care is to approve himself to God, whether the world approve or condemn him.

6. He walks singly, 2 Cor. i. 12. above cited. The upright man is opposite to the double minded man,

man, who in the language of the holy Ghoſt hath *a heart and a heart*, Pſal. xii 2. that is, a double heart. This ſingleneſs was a bright part of the character of the primitive Chriſtians, of whom it is ſaid. Acts ii. 46. that, 'they did eat their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart;' but it is a rare character with us. The upright man walks ſingly,

(1.) In oppoſition to deceitfulneſs, Col. iii. 22. He dare not deal deceitfully with God, like thoſe who with the mouth ſhewed much love, but their hearts went after their covetouſneſs. Hence the upright man is content that God would ſearch and ſift him, as deſiring to be open before him: Pſal cxxxix. 23, 24. 'Search me, O God, ſays David, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.' He abhors deceitful dealing with men, as knowing it is an abomination to the Lord. He dares not uſe the boutgates and tricks that others ſtand not upon; but deals ſingly towards God and man.

(2.) In oppoſition to ſelfiſhneſs, Eph. vi. 5. They will labour to be ſingle in their aims and deſigns, for the honour of God in the chief place, and their own and their neighbours good in the next. Selfiſhneſs is a devouring deep that ſwallows up all due concern for the honour of God, and the good of others; and ſacrifices all to one's own intereſt: ſo that ſelf is all that ſuch ſeek in their religious performances, and worldly buſineſs. Where it predominates, there is no room for uprightneſs.

7. *Laſtly*, He walks conſtantly in the paths of uprightneſs, John viii. 31. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed." He walketh, which denotes a continued action; he perſeveres in the Lord's way; uprightneſs is his conſtant courſe in the whole of his life. A good man may do an ill thing, and an ill man may do a good thing: but it is the habitual courſe of a man's life that denominates him a good or ill man. For men to take their religion by fits

fits and ſtarts, and now and then to make conſcience of their duty to God and to man; and anon to ſhake all looſe again, and walk like men of Belial without yoke; that is not the upright walking, that is the character of thoſe who ſhall be inhabitants of heaven. Remember that ſaying of Chriſt's, 'He ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved,' Matth. xxiv. 13.

II. I proceed to confirm the doctrine, that it is ſuch as walk uprightly now, who ſhall dwell in heaven hereafter. In order to this, conſider,

1. Heaven is the land of uprightneſs, Pſal. cxliii. 10. All are upright there, God, angels, and men. All liars or diſſemblers with God or men, are excluded from heaven, and declared to be ſuch as ſhall have their portion in hell, Matth. xxiv. *ult.* Rev. xxii 15. It is the upright only that will dwell in heaven, Pſal. cxl. *ult.* 'The upright ſhall dwell in thy preſence.'

2. The new birth, which is from heaven, and makes men meet for heaven, frames them to an upright walk. No perſons get there, but ſuch as are born again: for, ſays our Lord, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God,' John iii. 3. None are born again, but thereby they get a new ſet of heart, whereby they are made upright in heart, Pſal. xxxvi. 10. And an upright heart will certainly ſhew itſelf in one's walk; 2 Cor. v. 17. "If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſſed away, behold, all things are become new. Therefore a pure heart and clean hands are joined together, Pſal. xxiv. 4.

3. An upright walk is the ſaints walk, in which they make forward to the kingdom. Hence Solomon ſays, "Thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteouſneſs, and in uprightneſs of heart with thee," 1 Kings iii. 6. And no man can expect on good grounds to walk in white in heaven, but he who walks in uprightneſs here. Hence Chriſt ſays

ſays to the church of Sardis, "Thou haſt a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they ſhall walk with me in white," Rev iii. 4. The contrary way is the way of the wicked and leads to darkneſs, 'Whoſe ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths,' Prov ii. 15.

4 *Laſtly*, The Lord himſelf hath plainly determined in his word, that upright walkers and they only ſhall be ſaved, Prov. xxviii. 18. *Whoſo walketh uprightly, ſhall be ſaved.* If the blood of Chriſt hath touched a man's conſcience, and the Spirit of Chriſt ſanctified his ſoul, that man will walk uprightly As for others, they have no ſhare of theſe; and however they may carry it a while, they will be ruined in a moment.

I come now to the application of this ſubject, which I ſhall diſcuſs in an uſe of conviction and an uſe of exhortation.

USE I. for conviction. This may ſerve to convince us, that there are few of this generation that will dwell in heaven, if they turn not over a new leaf, and fall on a way they are not acquainted with yet, *viz.* the way of uprightneſs. Well may we take up Micah's lamentation over the men of theſe dregs of time we live in, Micah vii. 1—4. 'Wo is me, for I am as when 'they have gathered the ſummer-fruits, as the grape-'gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluſter to eat: 'my ſoul deſired the firſt ripe fruit. The good man is 'periſhed out of the earth: and there is none upright 'among men: they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt 'every man his brother with a net. That they may 'do evil with both hands earneſtly, the prince aſketh, 'and the judge aſketh for a reward: and the great man 'he uttereth his miſchievous deſire: ſo they wrapt it 'up. The beſt of them is as a brier: the moſt upright 'is ſharper than a thorn-hedge: the day of thy watchmen, and thy viſitation cometh; now ſhall be their 'perplexity.' But inſtead of uprightneſs, there is much

much double dealing with God and with men. I offer a few of many glaring signs and evidences of want of uprightness.

*Sign* 1. Men keeping still some beloved lust or other, that all the checks they get for it, from the word, their consciences, or providence, cannot make them part with. They never deal uprightly with God, but still like Ananias and Sapphira keep back a part; quite contrary to the practice of the holy Psalmist, who says, 'I was upright before him: and I kept myself from mine iniquity,' Psal. xviii 23.

*Sign* 2. Having more regard to the eye of men, than to the eye of the all-seeing God. Their credit has more weight with them than their conscience; and if they can please men, they little regard whether they please God or not, Gal. i 10. Hence if they can carry their wickedness secretly to the world, they regard no more than if God were closed up in heaven.

*Sign* 3. Impatience of reproof, a sad sign of a heart not upright with God. As a man that desires to keep a clean face, will bear with one that tells him of a spot upon it; so an upright man will take with warnings, admonition, and reproofs, Psal. cxli. 5. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities." And alas! there are few this day of that sort. Men love their sins, at least their credit, better than to bear with having it told them that they have done an ill thing.

*Sign* 4. Not labouring to approve one's self to God in one's dealings with men, in matters of the world, Eph. vi. 5, 6. 2 Cor. i. 12. An upright man, in worldly matters, will look on God as his party as well as his neighbour. He will deal in these things, as knowing that God is his witness, and will be his judge. But alas! most men have no eye to God, but in their religious duties, which shews that they are not upright with God there neither.

*Sign*

*Sign* 5 The wearing out of the ſenſe of the binding force of that rule from off the ſpirits of men, Matth. vii. 12. "All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them." This is a rule of practice, which the very light of nature teacheth, as the bond of ſociety, confirmed to us by divine revelation; but ſo little regarded in our day, as if men had renounced their reaſon, as well as their religion in favour of their own ſelfiſh ends Hence, when there is occaſion of advantage offering to many, there is no more conſidered by them, but if it be for their own profit; no more conſideration of their neighbours, than if they alone were in the world, or at leaſt that they may very well build up the intereſt of their dear ſelf on the ruins of others.

*Sign* 6. The abounding of fraud, deceit, and violence among men. Religion in the power of it is much worn out from among the generation, and moral honeſty is dying out apace. The fear of God is caſt off by the moſt part, and an upright regard to men is rare to be found. It was ſo with the Jews before the Babyloniſh captivity, Jer. ix. 4. 5 9. "Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and truſt ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly ſupplant, and every neighbour will walk with ſlanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not ſpeak the truth: they have taught their tongue to ſpeak lies, and weary themſelves to commit iniquity. Shall I not viſit them for theſe things? ſaith the Lord: ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?" It was ſo with the old world before the deluge came on, Gen vi. 4. 11. "There were giants in the earth in thoſe days; and alſo after that, when the ſons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them; the ſame became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown The earth alſo was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence." It is ſo with us at this day; and there is no

ground to doubt but it will bring a heavy ſtroke on the generation.

*Uſe* II. of exhortation. As ever ye would dwell in heaven, walk uprightly on this earth. I ſhall enforce this exhortation with a few motives.

*Mot.* 1. They who walk otherwiſe declare themſelves ſtrangers to Chriſt, without Chriſt, without hope, and without God in the world. They have no ſaving intereſt in Chriſt who do not love him, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be anathema, Maran-atha." It is the upright only that love him, Cant. i. 4. They only are accounted to love him that are upright in their walk, John xiv. 15. *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* 1 John v. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.* Hence upright walking is declared to be the evidence of one's right and title to heaven, Rev. xxii. 14. "B'eſſed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

*Mot.* 2. God hates hypocritical and deceitful men, and excludes them from communion with him here and hereafter, Pſal. v. 5, 6. "The foolish ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight: thou hateſt all workers of iniquity. Thou ſhalt deſtroy them that ſpeak leaſing." God is light, which ſets every thing in its true colours. As darkneſs then is contrary to light, ſo are they to the nature and will of God, and darkneſs will be their portion, Matth. xxiv. *ult.* "He ſhall cut him aſunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth."

*Mot.* 3. The cheat falls heavieſt on the man himſelf who does not walk uprightly. Men deal deceitfully with God; but can they deceive him, can they blind his all-ſeeing eye? No: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap," Gal. vi. 7. They deal deceitfully with men, and they may deceive them indeed: but where is the gain, when perhaps they procure a good opinion

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of themſelves from others, which they do not deſerve; but in the mean time they bring double guilt on their own ſouls, both doing evil, and pretending the contrary; and ſo expoſe themſelves to God's wrath both as evil-doers and as diſſemblers.

*Mot.* 4. The trade of deceitful dealing and diſſembling either with God or man, will not laſte. All the hypocriſy and deceit of the world will be expoſed to open view ere long, when Chriſt ſhall ſet his throne for judgement. "There is nothing covered, (ſays he,) that ſhall not be revealed; and hid, that ſhall not be known, Matth. x. 26. For God ſhall bring every work into judgement, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," Eccl. xii. *ult.* And there will be no place for deceit any more. None will pretend to be what he is not in hell; and there will be no place for over-reaching others there.

*Mot.* 5. There is nothing in the world worth going off the way of uprightneſs for, Iſa. xxxiii. 15. For whatever is to be had that way, is had with God's diſpleaſure, and inſtead of a rod it becomes a ſerpent, Eccl. x. 8. "He that diggeth a pit, ſhall fall into it; and whoſo breaketh an hedge, a ſerpent ſhall bite him." And however men fare according to their wiſh in ſuch a way, it is a dear reckoning that comes in at the end. It is a way to cut mens days, Pſal. lv. *ult.* "Bloody and deceitful men ſhall not live out half their days:" and a fair way to ruin them for another world, Jer. xvii. 11. "He that getteth riches, and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his days, and at his end ſhall be a fool."

*Mot. lyi,* Conſider the excellency of uprightneſs and walking uprightly.

1. It is very pleaſing and acceptable in the ſight of God, Pſal xi 7. "The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs, his countenance doth behold the upright." It is his own image, and he cannot but love it. When he made man like himſelf, he made him upright. Job was a nonſuch man in God's account, and he was an

upright man, Job i. 8. See how Christ commends Nathanael, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile*, John i. 47.

2. Though there be many weaknesses hanging about a man, yet, if what he does, he do uprightly, that will not mar the acceptance of his work with God through Christ, Cant. v. 2. Gold is precious, though it be among much dross; and our gracious God knows how to discern betwixt and separate the dross from the gold, 1 Kings xv. 14. "The high places were not removed: nevertheless, Asa his heart was perfect with the Lord all his days."

3. It is the great distinguishing character betwixt good and bad men, Christ's sheep and the devil's goats, whether hypocrites or profane, Psal. cxxv. 4, 5. "Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel."

4. It is a great preservative against apostasy, 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us. Prov. xiii. 6. Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way." It is the want of it, that makes so many apostates, in an ensnaring world, wherein they that will be led off the way, will not want suitable temptations.

5. It is a notable comfort in the worst of times, that will last when all other comforts are taken from us, 2 Cor. i. 12. forecited. Conscience of uprightness is a feast indeed.

6. They are entitled to protection from the evil day in a special manner, whether God takes them away ere it come, Isa. lvi. 2. or they be sheltered when it comes, as Noah was, Gen. vi. 9.

7. *Lastly*, Their end will be peace, Psal. xxxvii. 37.

37. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" A blessing follows theirs after they are dead and gone, Psal cxii. 2. 'The generation of the upright shall be blessed."

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# The Citizen of Zion a Worker of Righteousness.

PSALM XV. 2.

——*And worketh Righteousness.*——

HERE is the second character of an inhabitant of heaven. He is a worker, not one that standeth idle in the market-place; but a doer of good works: he worketh righteousness towards God and man, making it his business to give both to God and man their due. For the words are general, taking in whatsoever is just and righteous, whether owing to God or man.

The doctrine natively arising from the text is as follows, *viz.*

DOCT. *It is he that worketh righteousness now in this world, that shall dwell in heaven hereafter.*

In prosecuting this doctrine, I shall,

I. Unfold this character of one that shall dwell in heaven, *He worketh righteousness.*

II. Confirm the doctrine.

III. Apply.

I. I am to unfold this character of one that shall dwell in heaven, *He worketh righteousness.* I take it up in three parts.

*First*, He is a believer in Christ, and righteous by faith. This is a necessary and chief branch of this character, according to our Lord's own testimony, John vi. 29. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." He that does not work this work, works no righteousness at all. The imputed righteousness of a Redeemer is the meat abiding unto everlasting life, which our Lord calls us to work, that is, to get to ourselves by faith, ver. 27. *Gr.* To be a worker of righteousness supposes one to be in the first place a believer, one laying hold on and embracing Christ for righteousness, and living by faith in him. This appears,

1. A man must first be righteous, before he can work righteousness of life, 1 John iii 7. "He that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous." The tree makes the fruit, not the fruit the tree: and therefore the tree must be good, before the fruit can be good, Matth vii 18. A righteous man may make a righteous work, but no work of an unrighteous man can make him righteous. Now we become righteous only by faith through the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, Rom v. 1.

2. A soul not united to Jesus Christ, cannot work righteousness, John xv 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* All life and strength spiritual for sinners, is treasured up in Christ, 1 John v. 11, 12. As the pipe laid apart of the fountain, must be empty of water; so is the soul of life and strength, which is not united to Christ. And it is by faith that souls are united to him. So, where there is no faith, there is no life; and where there is no life, there is no working of righteousness.

3. While the conscience is not purged of the guilt of eternal death, the works wrought by the man are but dead works, not works of righteousness, Heb ix. 14. And it is only the blood of Christ applied by faith to it can purge the conscience, remove the curse, which, while it lies on a man, will leave him eternally barren.

4. *Lastly*,

4. *Laſtly*, Faith is the ſpring of all good works. There the man's working of righteouſneſs begins, 1 Tim. i. 5. 1 John iii 12. How was it that Abel wrought righteouſneſs? The apoſtle tells us, Heb. xi. 4 "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſs, that he was righteous" And without it no man can do a work pleaſing to God, and therefore no righteous work, ver 6. Whatever unbelievers do, is but a ſhadow of righteouſneſs. They are not married to Chriſt, therefore they cannot bring forth fruit to God; they are not begotten again, and made his children; therefore their obedience is but ſlaviſh: they are not partakers of his life, therefore their works are but dead.

Wherefore let men work as they will, if they be not true believers in Chriſt, they are not workers of righteouſneſs; and, conſequently, they will not be dwellers in heaven. Ye muſt then cloſe with Chriſt in the firſt place, and by faith receive the gift of imputed righteouſneſs, or ye will never truly bear this character of a citizen of Zion. A man ſhall as ſoon force fruit out of a branch broken off from the tree and withered, as work righteouſneſs without believing in, and uniting with Chriſt. Theſe are two things by which thoſe that hear the goſpel are ruined.

(1.) One is, works without faith; and here the legaliſt ſettles. Witneſs the Phariſee, Luke xviii. 11, 12. "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publican. I faſt twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs." And this he does to his own deſtruction. He aims at the duties of the law, but neglects the great duty of the goſpel. He aims to do good, but never takes the right way, the only way to be good. Hence his religion is no more but a parcel of hypocritical performances, dead works, the man himſelf being ſtill a ſtranger to the life of God, becauſe out of Chriſt.

In oppoſition to this, the citizen of Zion is a believer, one that has cloſed with Chriſt by faith, and that ſtill

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lives by faith, Gal. ii. 20 deriving virtue and ſtrength from Jeſus, and leaning on his righteouſneſs alone; who has taken, and doth ſtill take Chriſt for righteouſneſs and ſanctification too, Iſa. xlv. 24. Agreeable to this firſt part of the character.

(2) The other is, faith without works; which is but a dead faith, that will never ſave the ſoul. With this carnal goſpellers ſatisfy themſelves to their own deſtruction, James ii 14, 17. "What doth it profit, though a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works? can faith ſave him? Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" They pretend to believe in Chriſt, but are not conſcientious in the performance of holy duties. They will take Chriſt for their Prieſt to ſave them from hell, but not for their King to ſave them from their ſins. And ſo in effect they would make Chriſt the miniſter of ſin.

In oppoſition to this, the citizen of Zion, being a true believer, is a worker too, a worker of righteouſneſs. Being married to Chriſt, he brings forth the fruit of holy obedience; being raiſed with Chriſt, he lives to God, and ſerves in newneſs of the ſpirit. This brings me to the

*Second* part, He worketh righteouſneſs towards God. He is one that labours ſincerely to give God his due, being juſt and righteous in his dealings with his Maker. There is a duty that man owe to God, by the rule of juſtice: it is juſt that we perform it, and it is a wrong done to him, to with hold it, becauſe it is his due from us, Matth xxii. 21 *Render unto God the things that are God's.* And thus men are ſaid to work righteouſneſs, Iſa. lxiv. 5. "Thou meeteſt him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteouſneſs. Acts x. 35 In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him" The true Chriſtian that ſhall be a dweller in heaven, being furniſhed from heaven by faith for working righteouſneſs, walks accordingly, ſincerely endeavouring to give God his due. And

this

this part of his character shall be branched out in the following particulars.

1. He gives God his heart. God requires it, Prov. xxiii. 26. *My son, give me thine heart.* It is his due, because he made it. and he alone is the fit match for it, and only can satisfy it: and the believer gives it him, saying, as Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." He gives God his heart, to be his temple, his throne, the holy of holies consecrated to him. He lifts his heart and affections off the world. his lusts, yea even his lawful comforts. and gives it back to the proper owner; not daring to alienate it, knowing that to be sacrilegious robbing of God.

2. He gives God himself, as the Macedonians did, of whom it is said, that they *first gave their own selves to the Lord*, 2 Cor. viii. 5. The man does not look on himself as proprietor and master of himself. He is the Lord's by creation, and the Lord's by baptismal dedication, by redemption. by daily conservation: and therefore he makes himself the Lord's also by voluntary resignation, saying, *I am the Lord's*, Isa. xliv 5 He owns himself debtor to God for his being, and therefore accounts it just that he *be* for him, Hos. iii. 3. and therefore that soul and body be employed for him, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

3 He gives obedience to God, Luke i 6. Obedience is his due from us. He is the Lord, our Creator and Sovereign Lord; our Redeemer; and therefore we are bound to obey him, Exod. xx. 2. He is our King and Lawgiver, our Father and supreme Master, Mal. i 6. And the conscience of duty owing to him, on all these and other accounts, moves them that shall dwell in heaven to be obedient to him, as his creatures, subjects, children, and servants. And they give him illimited obedience, as their absolute Lord, not disputing, but doing his commands, as Abraham did, Gen. xxii.; universal obedience, as knowing that

that all his precepts are right, Pſal. cxix 128.; the obedience of the inner man, reſigning their ſouls to the will of his commands and of his providence; and of the outward man, ſtudying a blameleſs life, Luke i 6 Pſal. xxiv. 3, 4.; a chearful, ſou[illegible]ce obedience, with heart and good-will, Iſa. lxiv. 5.; and conſtant obedience, Pſal. cxix. 112.

4 He gives God his worſhip, John ix. 31. He is our God, and therefore it is his due, Matth. iv. 10.; and they who will not worſhip him, would ungod him if they could. But they that ſhall dwell in heaven, walk in the ordinances of his worſhip, as well as in his commands of obedience, Luke i. 6. They are univerſal in his worſhip, *ibid.*; they dare not keep back a part of his known worſhip from him. They give him outward worſhip, in prayer, praiſe, *&c.* They worſhip him in ſecret, Matth. vi. 6.; in their families, if they have a family, being awed by that threatening, "Pour out thy fury upon—the families that call not on thy name;" and in the congregation of his people. And they join inward worſhip with the outward, which diſtinguiſheth them from the hypocrite, as the other from the profane, John iv. 24. Phil. iii. 3 The inward worſhip is the worſhip of the heart, in faith, fear, love, patience, humiliation, *&c.*

5. He gives God the uſe of his talents. It is his due, for they are all his, given to men to improve them for him. They that ſhall dwell in heaven, know that their time is the Lord's, and they muſt be accountable to him for it; therefore they dare not ſquander it away idly, doing nothing, far leſs wickedly doing miſchief, Pſal. xc 12. Their gifts are the Lord's, given them to profit withal, 1 Cor xii. 7.; therefore they dare neither keep them laid up in the napkin of civility, ſatisfying themſelves that they do no ill with them, as the ſlothful ſervant did, Luke xix. 20.; nor hide them in the earth of carnality, lazineſs, and worldly-mindedneſs, ſo burying them, Matth. xxv.

xxv. 25.; knowing that both the one and the other are rejected of God, as unprofitable ſervants; that their wealth, honour, credit, authority, opportunities of doing good, are the Lord's; that God has intruſted them therewith for his own ſervice, and they muſt reckon for the uſe of them, Luke xvi. 2.; and therefore it is their care to honour the Lord with their ſubſtance, to improve their honour, &c. for God, 1 Sam. ii. 30. to do good as they have opportunity; that their youth, health, and ſtrength are the Lord's; that theſe will not laſt, and therefore they will uſe them for God, while they have them; knowing that the beſt is his due.

6 He gives God the praiſe and thankful acknowledgement of all his comforts and enjoyments, Pſal. c. 3. It is his due, for they are all his benefits. Our daily bread we have at his table: he gives us our good things, he gives us the good of them; and nothing can be more comfortable to us than he makes it to be. So while others ſacrifice to their own net, and ſay as Deut. viii. 17. "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; they remember the Lord, for it is he that giveth them power to get wealth," verſe 18. This thankfulneſs runs out into a ſtream of obedience.

7. He gives God the diſpoſal of his lot, Pſal. xlvii. 4. It is his due; hence is that, Matth. xx 15. 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?' So they that ſhall dwell in heaven are ſelf-denied ones: all they have in the world is at his diſpoſal, their health, wealth, liberty, and life itſelf, Luke xiv. 26

8. *Laſtly*, He gives God the chief part in all his duty to man, out of conſcience towards God doing his duty to men: his piety is the fountain of his juſtice, Eph. vi. 7. This is God's due, becauſe he is the beſt of beings, therefore to be loved for himſelf, and all others loved for his ſake. Hence he ſerves God in all his relations, and dealings with men, doing his

duty

duty to them as the will of God: so his love to God is the spring of his duty to men.

These are they that work righteousness; and without much ado, it may be seen, that there are few such in the world.

*Thirdly*, He works righteousness towards man. He that shall dwell in heaven hereafter, as he believes in Christ, and performs his duty to God in sincerity, so he is conscientious in the practice of his duty to his neighbour; and this completes his character as a worker of righteousness. Moral honesty is an essential part of true Christianity, without which no man shall see the Lord, 1 Cor. vi. 9. True religion makes a man not only pious towards God, but righteous towards his neighbour. This part of the character of a citizen of Zion we may take up in these three generals.

1. He is one that will wrong no man to his knowledge. This is a necessary evidence of sonship to God. Hence believers are represented to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" Phil. ii. 15. Job took the comfort of it as such, chap. xxxi. 7. 8. "If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands: then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out." The best of men must no doubt say in this case as in others, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults" But the habitual practice of injustice, and wronging our neighbours, is not, I am sure, the spot of God's children, but a mark of the devil's slaves, 1 Cor. vi. 9. And he that pursues his course that way through the world, will land in hell hereafter

2. He is one that sincerely studies to do as he would be done to. This a natural conscience dictates, and the revealed will of God confirms, Matth. vii. 12. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And regenerating

rating grace writes it in brighter characters on the renewed heart, Heb. viii. 10. Where the love of God is planted, the love of our neighbour is planted too. If we love God with a supreme love, we will love our neighbour as ourselves, and, consequently, study to do to him as we would have him, agreeable to the rules of the word, do to us, if we were in his circumstances. When Christ enters the heart, the great idol self is knocked down. Selfishness makes men carry towards their neighbour, as if their neighbour were bound in duty to them, but they free. But grace makes the man see that there is one Lawgiver over, and one law to him and his neighbour too.

3. He is one that makes conscience of giving every one their due. This also is the dictate of natural conscience, confirmed by the word, Rom. xiii. 7. *Render to all their dues*; and is the native exercise of that righteousness wherein the new man is created, Eph. iv. 24. This is right, that every one have their right of us, for we are members one of another; and if men be not conscientious in this, how do they bear the image of the righteous God, or how can they expect the crown of righteousness? Luke xvi. 11.

I mean not, as if no righteous person could transgress or offend against the rules of justice. No, no: the justice of the saints towards men is but imperfect in this life, as well as their holiness towards God. Even David was the man in the parable that took his neighbour's lamb, and good Asa *oppressed some of the people*, 2 Chron. xvi. 10. And the father of the faithful was justly reproved by a Heathen king for the wrong he did him, Gen. xx. 9.

But it is one thing to sin of ignorance and weakness, and another deliberately and of set purpose. It is one thing to be hurried into an act of injustice, by a violent temptation, passion, or fear, as in the aforementioned cases; and another to be habitually unjust, and ready to fall in with every opportunity of that nature. The former is incident to saints, the

latter peculiar to ſinners: the one repent their folly bitterly, when it is diſcovered to them, and will be ready to their power to make reparation, and are afraid to fall back into the ſame iniquitous ways again, watch againſt them, and the habitual bent of their heart is to do juſtly: but the other goes on impenitently in his ſin, is ready for the next temptation, and opportunity of dealing unjuſtly, becauſe the proud, covetous, ſelfiſh ſpirit reigns in him, to his deſtruction.

So ſtill it remains true, that the citizen of Zion, though he is not legally and perfectly juſt, is juſt evangelically, in a goſpel-ſenſe. He is a ſincere worker of righteouſneſs towards man; he is ſincerely righteous in his dealings towards his neighbour. This ſhall be branched out in ſeveral particulars.

1. He is righteous in his particular relations, giving his relatives what is due to them by that relation they ſtand in to him, Luke i. 6. He is righteous to them.

(1.) In the ſpecial duties of the relation. There is a duty the huſband owes to the wife, and the wife to the huſband; children to parents, and parents to children; ſervants to maſters, and maſters to ſervants, *&c.* as ſuch. And theſe duties they owe to them by a natural tie, or a voluntary compact. And the citizen of Zion worketh righteouſneſs, in making conſcience of theſe duties to their relatives, whether they be huſbands, wives, *&c.* 1 Cor. vii 33, 34 Eph. vi. 1, 5, 6. And the neglect of theſe will prove one to be none of thoſe that ſhall dwell in heaven.

(2.) In common duties. The common duties of juſtice which they owe to every body, they will not deny to their own relations. So huſbands waſting their ſubſtance to the detriment of their wives and children, are none of the citizens of Zion, 1 Tim. v. 8. Nor wives embezzling, and putting away their huſbands goods, to their loſs and without their knowledge

ledge. Prov. xiv. 1. and xxxi. 12. Children that embezzle and take away their parents substance without their consent, Prov. xxviii 24. Servants wronging their masters, in taking of their substance to themselves, or giving it away to others without their consent, Tit. ii 9, 10 It is injustice in all these, as being against the right of their relatives: and all such as tempt or encourage them to such injustice, wrong their own souls, Prov. xxix. 24.

2. He is righteous in his choice of the manner of life he betakes himself to for his through-bearing. This is a piece of justice he owes to mankind, and particularly to the society whereof he is a member, that he be useful in it, and not hurtful. And therefore the citizen of Zion,

(1.) Dare not be an idle man, without employment, if providence has not quite disabled him for any employment. None can with a good conscience lay the burden of their maintenance on others, further than what they cannot really prevent by their own utmost application, 2 Thess. iii. 10. Idle persons by that means are unjust both to them that have, to whom they are without necessity a burden, and they are unjust to those that are poor and really unable to help themselves, Eph. iv. 28.

(2.) He dare not use an unlawful employment, Acts xix 19. All gain gotten by unlawful means is stolen or robbed in the sight of God, and is injustice to men. And such is the gain of a lawful employment used unlawfully, as selling of drink to men to the abuse of themselves and God's good creature Ye would do your neighbour less hurt, if ye would steal the money out of his pocket; for by that means you would hurt him only in his purse, but at this rate you wound his conscience too. And when ye have considered that passage seriously, Hab. ii. 15. "Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink: that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayst look on their nakedness:" ye will see your gain

that way is like the gaining of a burning coal into your own bosom.

3 He is righteous in the management of his employment 1 Cor vii 24 "Let every man wherein he is called therein abide with God." He that walks with God at all, will walk with him in his employment, of whatever sort it be; following it conscientiously, as under the eye of God There is a snare in all employments, and a falsehood incident to all trades, by reason of the corruptions of men's heart: but he that shall dwell in heaven will be aware of it, while he is upon the earth, Heb xii 1

4 He is righteous in his commerce and bargains with men, 1 Thess. iv. 6 "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter" It is God's command that we do justly in these things, that we do as we would be done to. People's undermining one another in their bargains, raising themselves on their neighbour's ruins, taking their lands over their heads, raising and racking their rents to them, taking advantage in their bargains of their neighbour's necessities, or ignorance, using false weights and measures, adulterating of their wares, not keeping condition, but oppressing either in buying or selling, requiring more than due, or keeping back part of the price, need no more to shew the injustice of them, but for men to look in to their own breasts, and ask their own consciences, if that be the way they think it reasonable others should do with them, Lev. xxv. 14. "If thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand; ye shall not oppress one another" Consider what is said, Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16. "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions,—he shall dwell on high."

5. He is righteous in matters of neighbourhood and fellowship. That is an awful word in this affair, Deut. xxvii 17 "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's land-mark." A good man will be as loath

to

to do wrong in neighbourhood, as to receive wrong; and will find himself in conscience bound, not only to abstain from wilful wronging of them, but to beware of culpable negligence, whereby they may sustain loss, though undesigned. And as he is in partnership with others, he will beware of taking more to himself than falls to his share, or raising gain to himself in a way that causeth his neighbour's loss. For all these are contrary to the love we owe to others as to ourselves.

6 He is righteous in matters of trust, that is, in things committed to his care, and put into his hand. Treachery under trust is among the worst pieces of injustice: and betrayers of their trust in things of this world, can not expect the things of a better world to be committed to them. Luke xvi. 11. Let such as have other people's business and goods committed to them take heed to this; and act as in the sight of God, and in the sight of those who trust them, and beware of the snare that is ready for them there, as they would not ruin their own souls, Prov. xxviii 20.

7. He is righteous in the matter of loans. Borrowing and lending is a necessary bond of society among neighbours, and a good man will find himself to be obliged to do justly therein; to see that the thing borrowed by him, sustain no notable loss by his means, or if it do, to repair the loss, and faithfully to restore the the thing borrowed. He will pay his just debts if he be able, and will conscientiously see that he run himself into no more than he is in a probable condition to pay, Psal. xxxvii. 21. He will not shave off his neighbour from what is his due unnecessarily, and oblige him to vexatious law-suits for his own, Prov. iii 28. 30. Nor will he use extortion in compensation of loans, imposing upon his neighbour beyond law and right, Psal. xv. *ult.*

8 He is righteous in the matter of lost things found by him, and will conscientiously restore, if the owner can be found, and will not dare fraudulently to conceal it, and much less dispatch it so as the owner

cannot have it again. For that fraudulent concealment and retaining such a thing, is no other but a continued theft and wronging our neighbour. Deut xxii. 1, 2, 3. So righteous Jacob determined, Gen. xxx. 33. And to this may be added, that the righteous man will find himself obliged to prevent any loss to his neighbour, which he has an opportunity to prevent, whether his neighbour see it or not.

9. He is righteous in using this world's goods to the honour of God, and the relief of the needy, Psal. cxii. 5, 9. Though men have the right of property in their own substance, yet the poor have a right of charity in them so far as they need, and their neighbours can spare. And the truth is, those to whom God has given substance, they are his stewards, and have their orders from him to steward faithfully as they will be answerable; and the poor and needy are among those by him are committed to their stewardship. And the weight laid on this piece of righteousness, as an evidence of imputed righteousness, by our Lord himself, Luke xvi. 9. and in Matth. xxv. will always have weight with a good man, to be a worker of righteousness, in point of a charitable disposition.

*Lastly*, In a word, he is conscientiously righteous in all things that concern his neighbour, Micah vi. 8. He that is a Christian indeed will be a strict observer of truth, faithfulness, and justice, in the matters of this world; dealing with men as under the all seeing eye of God. And he will never want a quick-sighted witness to his dealings with men, while there is a God in heaven, whether the party he deals with be absent or present skilful or simple, able to revenge any wrong done to him or unable.

II. I proceed to confirm this doctrine. To this end consider,

1. God is a righteous God. He is righteous in his nature, and he loves righteousness, Psal. xi. *ult.* He

He cannot but do what is right, Gen. xviii. 25. So the King of heaven is a righteous King: what communion can they have with him that are unrighteous?

2. It is the great end of redemption by Christ, that his people may be righteous, and so fitted for heaven. He gave himself to purchase the Spirit of faith and holiness, by which they might work, who had lost all power of working righteousness by the fall, Tit. ii. 14. He delivers them from the bondage of their spiritual enemies, that they may serve him in righteousness, Luke i. 74, 75. Accordingly it is promised to the Redeemer, Isa. lx. 21. *Thy people shall be all righteous.*

3. *Lastly*, Men will be judged and sentence pass upon them before the tribunal of God, according to their works, Rev. xx. 12, 13. See Matth. xxv. Works of righteousness will be the evidence of a title to heaven; and unrighteous works the cause of damnation.

I shall shut up this branch of the character of a citizen of Zion, with a word of improvement.

USE I. This may let us see that few in this world are safe for another world. Alas! how many are there, (1.) Who are not righteous towards men? (2.) Who make no conscience of giving God his due, and walking righteously with him? And, (3.) Though they may seem to be something in both these respects, yet are not righteous by faith, nor solicitous to be so?

USE II. Of exhortation. Study then to be workers of righteousness, in all the respects that have been declared, and so evidence yourselves to be citizens of Zion *.

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* As the author has not extended this USE in the MS. he probably on this occasion recapitulated what he had delivered more fully, on a former occasion, in the application of his exposition of the eighth commandment. There the reader will find it, when his Body of Divinity is published, which is now in the Press.

# The Citizen of Zion a Speaker of Truth in his Heart.

PSALM xv. 2.

——*And speaketh the Truth in his heart.*

HERE is the third character of a citizen of Zion, He is a follower of truth. It hath two parts clearly distinguished in the original. (1.) He speaketh truth; what he expresses in words, he is careful that it be consistent with truth. (2.) He speaketh truth in his heart. There is a speaking in the heart without words, Psal. xiv. 1. Eccl. ii. 15. This is done by thoughts and reasonings, and much depends on their being consistent with truth. And both these go together to make up the character of one that shall be an inhabitant of heaven. The first part is but a negative mark; it is the addition of the latter that makes the positive mark.

Two doctrines are deducible from the text, *viz.*

DOCT. I. *Those that shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter, are such as make conscience of speaking truth while they are in this world.*

DOCT. II. *They who shall be inhabitants of heaven, are such as not only speak truth to others, but speak truth within their own hearts.*

I shall prosecute each doctrine in order:

DOCT. I. *They that shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter, are such as make conscience of speaking truth while they are in this world.*

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall,

I. Explain this character, or part of the character of a citizen of Zion.

II. Confirm

II. Confirm the doctrine.
III. Make application.

I. The first head is to explain this part of the character of a citizen of Zion, That he is one who speaketh the truth. And here I will shew,

1. What is truth.

2. What it is to be a speaker of truth.

*First*, I am to shew what is truth. This question Pilate proposed to Christ, but staid not for an answer, John xviii. 38. Truth is a sacred harmony or agreement of things. Anatomists have observed, that the tongue in man is tied with a double string to the heart. And so in truth spoken there is necessary a double agreement of our words.

1. With our heart. That is, to the speaking of truth, it is necessary our words agree with our mind and thoughts about the thing. We must speak as we think, and our tongues must be faithful interpreters of our mind: otherwise we lie, not speaking as we think. So what is truth in itself may be spoken by a man, and yet he be a liar, *viz.* if he does not think as he speaks.

2. With the thing as it is in itself. Though we think a thing to be so, which is not so, we lie, when we affirm it; because it is not as we say, though we really think it is so. For our mistaken notions of things can never stamp lies to pass current for truths, 2 Thess. ii. 11.

*Secondly*, I shall shew what it is to be a speaker of truth, which is the character of a citizen of Zion. It lies in two things.

1. A citizen of Zion is one who makes conscience of speaking out the truth in the proper time and season thereof, John xviii. 37. As the head was, so will the members be on the side of truth in the world, 3 John 8. It is for this end God has called his own people out of the world lying in wickedness and falsehood.

Solomon

Solomon tells us, Eccl. iii 7 that, "There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." People may sin egregiously by an unseasonable speaking of the truth, Prov. xxix 11. "A fool uttereth all his mind." This was Doeg's sin, Psal. lii. Nature has put a double bar on our tongues, and discretion, and much more the grace of God, will add a third. Those whose tongues are like a loose window in wind, ever clattering, discover themselves to have very little either wit or grace, if any at all. Talkativeness is, (1.) A sign of little awe or dread of God upon the heart, Eccl. v. 2 "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. God has given men two ears, and but one tongue, which says, that, "every man should be swift to hear, slow to speak," Jam. i. 19. (2.) The fool's badge, Eccl. v. 3. "A fool's voice is known by multitude of words. Prov. xiv. 33. Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known." It is the empty barrel that makes most noise; which made an orator ask a double fee of a talkative scholar, one to teach him to speak well, another to teach him to hold his peace. Our words should be few, true, and seasonable.

Now the citizen of Zion is a speaker out of the truth in the season thereof, that is, when he is called of God to speak it. And a man is called to speak out the truth, when the glory of God, or the good of others make it necessary, or their own good, 1 Cor. x. 31. Rom. xiii. 9 Our tongue is called our glory, because thereby we must glorify God. And it is a bond of human society, whereby we ought to contribute to our power to remove those ills that are the plagues and pests of society. This call is twofold.

(1.) Private and providential, wherein men have the call of providence to declare the truth, though there is no human authority obliging them to it. This

This ordinarily occurs in converſation among men, where truth may be wronged, God diſhonoured, ourſelves or neighbours injured, if there is no body to ſpeak out the truth. A good Chriſtian will find himſelf obliged to ſpeak the truth upon this call, though none is deſiring him, 1 Sam. xix. 4.

(2.) Public and authoritative, when people are called either by the authority of the magiſtrate or of the church, judicially to declare the truth. This is a ſolemn call from God to that duty, which he gives by the mouth of thoſe whom he has put in authority, either making them gods by office, or ambaſſadors for God. And therefore to decline the ſpeaking out of truth in that caſe, is to decline God's ſolemn call to it, and to mar the courſe of juſtice, and the honour of God, Iſa. lix. 14.

Now, one that ſhall be an inhabitant of heaven being thus called, will conſcientiouſly as in the ſight of God ſpeak out the truth; and that,

[1.] Fully, not daring to conceal the truth, nor any part of it known to them, which may contribute to the clearing of the matter in queſtion. So did that prudent woman mentioned, 2 Sam. xiv. 18.—20. Ananias and Sapphira were ſtruck dead, for their doing otherwiſe in ſuch a caſe, Acts v.

[2.] Freely, not being hampered in ſpeaking out the truth by the awe of any perſon, or the dread of any thing that may befal them for doing their duty which God calls them to, 1 Sam. xix. 4, 5. The dread of God will be on the ſpirits of his own children, to carry them out in this; and will downweigh reſpect to all others, Job xxxii. *ult.*

[3.] Clearly, not equivocating, ſhifting, mincing, obſcuring, and wrapping up the truth; ſo as they who hear it know not what to make of it, Joſh. vii. 19. 20. Awful is that curſe, Jer. xlviii. 10. "Curſed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully."

[4.] Sincerely, 2 Chron. xix. 9. without feud or favour to any. The grace of God working in the heart

heart will make gracious people to speak as in the sight of God. 2 Cor. ii. 17

2. A citizen of Zion is one who makes conscience of speaking nothing but the truth at any time, Isa. lxiii. 8 Though we are not at every time to be blabbing out the truth we do know, yet we are at no time to lie against the truth, 2 Cor. xiii. 8. There can be no call to lie, but from the devil, and mens own corrupt hearts whatever circumstances we be in, Job xiii. 7, 8 There is no time to speak falsely. And we are to speak nothing but truth.

(1.) In speaking to God, in our professions, confessions, and prayers. Hypocrites lie to the Lord, Psal. lxxviii. 36. Sincere souls will speak truth

(2.) In speaking to men, Eph. iv. 25 whether in private conversation, or in public appearances.

II. I come now to confirm the doctrine. It is evident, if ye consider,

1. That in the saints the image of Satan is defaced, and the power of the corruption of nature broken, Rev. xxi. *ult.* Corrupt men may call Satan father, for he abode not in the truth, but is the father of lies, John viii. 44. And the corruption of nature quickly vents itself in lying, bring what the unrenewed heart as naturally brings forth, as the cursed ground brings forth thorns and thistles, Psal. lviii. 3. "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray, as soon as they be born, speaking lies." So that where-ever the grace of God comes, it must give a new set.

2. The image of God is repaired in them, which has *truth* for a shining lineament in it, Eph. iv. 24. It was a notable saying of a philosopher, That truth is so great a perfection, that if God would render himself visible, he would take light for his body, and truth for his soul. And the scripture assures us, that Christ shewing himself to the world, was *the light* and *the truth*. God is *truth* itself, and no lie can have place with him, Tit. i. 2. Numb. xxiii. 19 Where then

then the image of God is repaired. as it is in all the saints, no doubt the lying disposition will be broken in them.

3. The Christian life is a *walking in truth*, 3 John 3. There is truth of heart in true Christians, and that makes truth of conversation. Yea, it is called a *speaking of truth*, Eph. iv. 15. the whole life of a Christian being an expressing of truth in practice. So that to walk in lies is the very reverse of Christianity.

4. *Lastly*, The Lord has expressly declared, that liars shall be the inhabitants of hell, not of heaven; that in their end they shall not be with God, who is the God of truth, but with the devil, the father of lies, Rev. xxi *ult.* and xxii. 15.

I shall now make application of this subject.

Use I. This writes death on the faces of two sorts of people.

1. Those who are concealers of the truth, which God calls them to speak out. There are many who can set a brazen face against the truth, and cause their tongues go on in a course of lying against their consciences, and outface and bear down what God and their own consciences know to be truth: and though their confessing the truth would honour God, and be a mean to bring their souls out of the snare of the devil; yet, because it may be to their own shame before men, they will shifle and conceal the truth, Jer. ix. 3, 5. And there are not wanting others, who, however ready they may be to speak in other cases, have never a mouth to open in a good cause, for the suppressing of sin and wickedness. But though they be called of God to speak what they know to be truth, yet they will set their foot on it, and wickedly conceal it, or mince it, and shift the matter, as men who have no fear of God before their eyes. Do such believe there is a heaven and a hell? If they do, how can they think that ever they shall be inhabitants

of heaven, in whom the character of a citizen of Zion is not to be found? Let all such remember that awful word, Rom i. 18. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" God will charge the iniquity on those who conceal it, Lev. v. 1. and that as consenting to it, Deut xiii 8. Truth is strong, and will prevail, and will set up its head at length, to the confusion of those who bear it down.

2. All liars, who make not conscience of speaking truth, but speak lies and falsehood. This sin of lying, is a common vice: but it is the black brand of one that shall never see heaven. And that this is so very common, notwithstanding that the Scripture is so express in assigning liars for the inhabitants of hell, not of heaven; is not to be thought strange, while that stands in the Bible, Matth. vii. 13. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." If they that shall be inhabitants of heaven be such as speak the truth, what shall become of liars? Are they not barred out of heaven thereby? And I charge all liars to take this home; and,

(1.) The jesting liars, who will lie to make others merry, lie to make sport, Hos. vii. 3. Those men are liberal of the blood of their own souls, who, to make sport to others, will run the risk of everlasting sorrow to themselves. See Prov. xxvi. 18 19.

(2) The officious liars, who will lie to do themselves or others a real good turn. They are apt to think, that since they do good by their lies, or intend to do good by them, there is no hazard in such lying. But that is the doctrine of the father of lies, not of the scriptures of truth, 1 John ii. 21 *No lie is of the truth.* If it were possible to save a soul by a lie, or honour God by one, it is unlawful Hence Job says, chap. xiii. 7 "Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?" The damnation of such is as just, as

as it is ſure, Rom iii 8. who do ſo, if mercy prevent it not.

(3.) The pernicious liars, who lie to do a miſchief thereby, Prov vi. 17. Theſe ſorts of liars break at once the bonds of charity and truth, and of all liars are the likeſt their father the devil, who was at once a liar and a murderer. Yet how many ſuch are there, whoſe lying tongues are ſwords to ſtab, and arrows to pierce their neighbours, and a fire from hell to ſet whole ſocieties in a flame?

(4.) The covetous liars, whoſe covetous hearts uſe their lying tongues to deceive their neighbour, Prov. xx. 14. "It is naught, it is naught, ſaith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boaſteth." O! what lying is there in buying and ſelling, and begging, by this means? For a thing of nought men will not ſtand to lie; if they can gain a very little thing, they will not ſtand upon the expence of truth, not conſidering the unſpeakable loſs of the ſoul thereby.

(5.) The proud boaſting liars, who to raiſe others eſteem of them, and to be thought fine people, will tell of themſelves what has no ground in truth, Prov. xxv. 14. They form to themſelves a figure of themſelves in their own imagination, and breathe out lies to fix that opinion of them in others. Some who pride themſelves in miſchief, will tell wickedneſs of themſelves which they never did: but that is enough to make them guilty of it before God. Pride of heart is a nurſe of lying

(6.) The flattering liars, who ſpeak of others the good they do not think, juſt to curry favour with them, Pſal. xii 2. 3. They fawn like dogs, and ſooth up men in falſehood and vanity, like the devil. Their flattering tongue is ſoft as oil, but in the mean time it is more running than a ſword, Prov. xxvi 28. For by it two fall at once, the flattered as well as the flatterer, Prov. xxix. 5.

(7.) The fearful liars, who, for fear of others, make lies their refuge, as children often do, bewray-

ing thereby the corruption of their nature, Pſal lviii. 3 ; and others too, who though men and woman in years, are but children in courage, Prov. xxix 25. *The fear of man bringeth a ſnare.* But ſad is the doom of thoſe who have ſo little regard to truth as to be frighted into lies, Rev xxi. 8.

(8.) The talkative liars Solomon obſerves, Prov. x 19. *In the multitude of words there wanteth not ſin.* They who are given to much talking, will hardly be found regardful of truth. When their fund of truth runs out, or occurs not, they will rather fouſt in lies than hold their peace. And I believe a ſtrict regard to truth would be a notable means to repreſs talkativeneſs.

(9.) The raſh liars, who lie through inadvertency and cuſtomary looſeneſs of ſpirit as to their words, 2 Sam xiii 30. Much ſin is contracted this way. There is ſo much careleſſneſs as to what men ſpeak, that their tongues outrun their minds, and ere they are aware they are mired in a lie. But if men muſt give an account of their idle words though true, much more of their lying words, though raſh and inadvertent.

Use II. I exhort you to ſpeak the truth, and dehort you from lying. For motives, conſider,

1. God is the God of truth, Deut. xxxii. 4. He is the author of truth, and truth is ſo much of his nature, that he who made the world of nothing, can no more lie than he can ceaſe to be God, Tit. i. 2. So that as fire is contrary to water, yea hell to heaven; ſo is the liar to God.

2. The devil is the author and father of lies, John viii. 44. He ruined the world at firſt with a lie, Gen. iii. 4, 5. He lied upon God, he lied to our firſt parents and deceived them, and he lied of himſelf. What wonder is it that he is ſo concerned to get the trade of lying kept up in the world, ſince he made ſuch a hand by it at firſt?

3. It is the bane of human ſociety. Truth is the bond

bond of society, which keeps men together, causing them that they may trust one another. Lying cuts this bond asunder, and so subverts the comfort and advantage of society, Micah vii. 5. And therefore liars deserve to be extruded out of society with other men, for they are the plagues and pests of it.

4. It is a mean, base, and contemptible thing; so so that no body regards a liar. Even they that will not stand to lie, cannot endure to be held and reputed liars; they will be ready to revenge the affront. This says that there is something so base in lying, that it leaves a man no credit. And no wonder; for finding a man to lie sometimes, nobody can trust him securely, even when he speaks truth.

5. Lying is the native product of the corruption of nature, the effect of the spawn of the old serpent left in the hearts of the children of men, Psal. lviii. 3. It is a part of the old man of sin, that will be put off where-ever the grace of God comes, Eph. iv. 25. Col. iii. 9. And there cannot be a more certain sign of one in the black state of nature, under the curse, than a habit of lying.

6. It is an abomination to God, and God abhors liars, Prov. vi. 17, 19. and xii. 22. Though ye think to please yourselves and others by lying, where is the gain when ye thereby make yourselves abominable to God?

7. *Lastly*, Lying will undoubtedly ruin your souls for evermore. God will destroy liars, Psal. v. 7. They shall surely perish, Prov. xix. 9. Rev. xxi *ult.* and xxii. 15.

Be concerned to curb it in young ones, as ye love their souls. Lying and stealing are akin, Hos. iv. 2. And when once they get a habit of it, how hard is it to get them off it?

Remember that God's omniscient eye is on you always, and mortify those corruptions whence lying arises.

DOCT. II. *They who shall be inhabitants of heaven, are such as not only speak truth to others, but speak truth within their own hearts.*

In discoursing this point, I shall,

I. Premise some things for the right understanding of it.

II. Shew the import of this part of the citizen of Zion's character.

III. Confirm the doctrine.

IV. Improve the subject.

I. I am to premise some things for the right understanding of this point.

1. When God created man, he set up the light of truth in his soul, that thereby he might clearly perceive the way to true happiness, and might not by false colours be led off his way, if he would take heed thereto, Gen. iii. 21. The remains of the natural law in the hearts of the Heathens, do evidence the knowledge of the truth necessary to true happiness, to have been perfect in innocent Adam, Rom. ii. 15. Eccl. vii. 29.

2. When man fell, the truth set up in his heart fell down too. Instead of his primitive light which represents things in their native colours, there came in darkness, which presents things in false colours unto men, Eph. v. 8. and makes them easy to be imposed upon and led out of the way. The father of lies prevailing with our first parents, left in their hearts a spawn of vanity, falsehood, and lies.

3. Hence proceed mistaken notions of the most weighty things, false apprehensions of them, and false reasonings about them, whereby men lie to themselves most dangerously, and deceive and cheat themselves thereby, even as by lying words they lie to deceive and cheat others, Isa. xliv. 20. And upon this kind of lying the scripture often fathers sinners ruin, Psal. l. 21. "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself:

ſelf: but I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes:" and therefore it ſhews the neceſſity of laying them aſide, Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." But this is the reigning diſpoſition of the hearts of all men by nature, and the thoughts of moſt men touching the ſtate of their ſouls are one continued web of lies, Jer. xvii. 9.

4. Where the grace of God comes, renewing and changing the heart, truth is reſtored again within the heart, Eph. v. 8. Men's notions of ſpiritual things are rectified, their thoughts and reaſonings about them are quite altered, 2 Cor. v. 17. We ſee it exemplified in Paul's caſe, Phil. iii. 7. "What things were gain to me, (ſays he) thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt." Hence repentance is, in ſcripture-language, a coming to one's ſelf, like a madman reſtored to his right mind; an after-wit, the man being brought to ſecond thoughts about his ſoul-matters, by which the firſt thoughts are diſcovered to have been falſehood and lies, quite wide of the truth.

5. *Laſtly*, From all this it neceſſarily follows, that it muſt be a diſtinguiſhing character of a ſaint, to ſpeak truth within his own heart; which no irregenerate man, while he is ſuch, does ever arrive at, Tit. iii. 3. Others being under the power of Satan, truth has not its efficacy within their hearts.

II. I ſhall next ſhew the import of this part of the citizen of Zion's character, that he is one that ſpeaketh the truth in his heart.

1. Citizens of Zion are not deceivers of themſelves as to their own ſpiritual ſtate, Gal. vi 3. It is very natural for men to lie on themſelves to themſelves in that matter, looking to themſelves in a falſe glaſs, which repreſents them to be in the favour of God, while they are in the gall of bitterneſs and the bond of iniquity. Thus did Paul lie of himſelf to himſelf, in his unconverted ſtate, Rom. vii. 9. "I was alive without

out the law once" Laodicea breathed out a heap of lies of this sort, Rev. iii. 17. "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. And though men think so of themselves, it is not one whit the more true, Isa. xliv. 20. The first work of the Spirit in conversion is to cause men speak truth in their hearts in this point, Luke xv. 17. Rom. vii. 9.

2. They labour to approve themselves to God in their way; not satisfying themselves with the approbation of men, but endeavouring to carry themselves as in the sight of God, Rom ii. 28, 29. Many will be at some pains to maintain truth in their conversation with men, who are very little concerned for truth in the inward parts, where they have to do with God alone. But a true Christian will be mainly concerned for this last, as the spring of the other. Hence David says, Psal. li. 6. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."

3 Truth is the prevailing predominant principle in their hearts. And therefore the Christian life is called a *speaker of truth*, Eph. iv. 15. *walking in truth* 3 John 3. Regeneration casts the heart into the very mould of truth, Rom. vi. 17 And so the truth taking the throne in the heart, frees them from the power of the deceitful lust which had a reigning power over them before. John viii. 32.

(1.) Law-truth is a predominant principle in the man's heart. And it serves to convince the man of his sinfulness of nature and life; to shew him his natural liableness to the curse for sin; to discover his absolute need of an imputed righteousness, and being interested in Christ, the absolute need of universal holiness of heart and life, John xvi. 8. Thus he is made to speak truth in his heart in those points, wherein the hearts of others to whom the law is never yet come in power, are stuffed with lies to their own destruction.

(2.) Gospel-tuth is a predominant principle in them

them. And it ſerves to point the ſoul to Jeſus Chriſt, as its alone righteouſneſs, and fountain of ſanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30 ; to carry the ſinner entirely out of himſelf for acceptance and favour with God ; to bring him forward to all the beauties of holineſs, and to carry him off them all in point of confidence, Phil. iii. 3. And thus the Chriſtian is made to ſpeak truth in his heart in thoſe points, wherein hypocrites, legaliſts, and formaliſts go on in a courſe of ſoul-ruining lies.

4 They form their thoughts of ſoul-matters, ſin, duty, ſafety, and danger, not according to their own luſts, nor the courſe of the world ; but according to the word of God, which is moſt firm truth, Pſal. cxix. 30, 31. Hence thoſe things which others ſee no ill in, they dare not meddle with ; becauſe they form their judgement of them by the word, while others have no regard to the teſtimony of the word there-anent. Here the ungodly go quite wrong, ſpeaking lies within their hearts.

They often herein downright contradict the word. They will promiſe themſelves ſafety in a courſe wherein God's word declares there can be no ſafety, Deut. xxix. 19. They will form to themſelves thoughts of God contrary to his holineſs, Pſal. l. 21. They will ſooth themſelves in thoughts unbecoming his omniſcience, that they may enjoy their ſecret wickedneſs, Ezek. viii. 12. They think to contemn God, and yet eſcape, Pſal. x. 13. They promiſe themſelves continuance of worldly proſperity, notwithſtanding God has declared the contrary, Pſal. x. 6. and xlix. 11. And many ſuch thoughts paſs through the hearts of men : and what are they all but ſo many heart-lies, which they make to themſelves to their own ruin ?

5 *Laſtly*, They form their reaſonings in ſoul-matters according to the principles of the word, and not their own corrupt luſts and affections, 2 Cor. x. 5. The luſts of ungodly men bear the ſway in them, and their reaſonings are managed by the power of their luſts, ſo as they may be accommodated to their corrupt affections.

affections. The man desires that there were not a God, and he considers how they prosper that despise him, and so says in his heart *There is no God*, Psal. xiv. 1. and concludes it is vain to be religious, Mal. iii. 14 15. He hears God is merciful; and thence he concludes, he may indulge himself in his sinful courses, and yet be safe in the end; thus speaking lies in his heart.

III To confirm this doctrine, consider,

1. They are all regenerated, savingly changed in all the faculties of their souls, John iii. 3. And in regeneration the law of God is written over again in their hearts, according to the great promise of the covenant, Heb. viii. 10. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Thus the light is set up within them, and the former darkness, under which the reigning deceit of the heart lodged, is put away. Their minds are renewed.

2. Sincerity and uprightness of heart, is that without which no man shall see the Lord. Matth. v. 8. The foolish virgins were shut out notwithstanding their fair outside, because there was no truth in their hearts. 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Hypocrites are they who speak not the truth in their hearts, and ruin and destruction certainly abide them. Matth xxiv *ult.*

3. If truth is not in the heart, the life will be but a mass of lies, falsehood, and vanity, Matth. vi. 23. Darkness and reigning deceit in the heart, will ever produce an unholy life: and they that live not holy, how shall they die happy? Heb. xii. 14.

I conclude with a short word of improvement.

USE. I. This doctrine writes death to several sorts of persons

1. Those who have never yet learned, by the Spirit's teaching, what a God the Lord is, how greatly he hates sin, and how severely he punishes it. Their notions of God are false, and under them they find shelter

shelter to their lusts. A clear evidence they have not yet known the Lord. But sooner or latter they will find their mistake, and find they have not spoke truth in their hearts of God, Psal. l. 21.

2. Those whose natural notions of sin have not yet been corected, by feeling the bitterness of it, Rom vii. 9. Many are ruined by not discerning the ill of sin: if they had just thoughts of it, they durst not venture on it so freely as they do; more than they would venture to take a serpent in their bosom. But their hearts lie to them about it, and they love to have it so.

3. Those who have never yet felt the absolute need of the blood and Spirit of Christ Jesus to remove their guilt, and break the power of sin in them. There is no other way to get it removed, Acts iv. 12.; and those who look for it another way, will find at length to their cost, that they have not spoke truth in their hearts.

4. Those who have not yet learned to make the word of God the rule of their life in all points. Gal vi. 16. Many have very little use for their Bibles, for regulating of their conversation. The course of this world serves them for a rule, and their own corrupt inclinations serve them for the same purpose. They will find these to have led them to lie in their hearts to themselves to their own ruin.

Use. II. Be exhorted to take heed to your hearts, that ye speak truth there, and deceive not yourselves. For motives consider,

1 Self-deceiving is frequent in the world, and there is a principle of self-love in every one leading them to it. Men of all sorts, professors and profane are apt to fall into it; therefore be on your guard.

2. Your eternal state depends on it If men be not led into truth in their hearts, they can never see nor fall on the way to happiness.

3. *Lastly*, It will make a dreadful awakening when the deceitful dream is at an end

Examine yourselves then, and see that ye get your judgement of spiritual things formed by the word.

The

THE

# Distinguishing Characters

OF

# TRUE BELIEVERS.

## III. In relation to their Speech, and Reverence of GOD's Name.

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A Caveat against profane Swearing, and a Persuasive to plain Speaking, without unhallowed Additions.

JAMES v 12.

*But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation* *.

IN these words we have three things.

1. A serious caveat against profane oathing or swearing: for otherwise an oath is an ordinance of God, Heb. vi. 16. and so to be used upon a due call thereto, Jer. iv. 2. In this caveat we have,

(1.) The matter cautioned against. [1.] Swearing by the *creatures*, as by *heaven* or *earth*, forms of oaths,

* The Sermons on this text were preached at Ettrick in August and September 1724.

oaths, it wou'd ſeem, then in uſe among untender men. [2] *Any other oath* as well as theſe; oaths of the ſame kind, namely, by creatures; and oaths of other kinds *viz.* by God their Maker. That the latter as well as the former profane ſwearing is here comprehended, appears from the univerſality of the expreſſion, and the direction as to mens ordinary converſe given in the following words, where the one as well as the other is excluded.

(2.) The manner of the caveat. It is given, [1] Very affectionately, *My brethren.* They were ſo in reſpect of their nation, and in reſpect of the Chriſtian religion which they profeſſed, being believing Jews Though heathens and infidels make no bones of ſwearing, yet it ill becomes the Chriſtian brotherhood, being ſo very contrary to the laws of Chriſt, Matth v 34,—37 *. [2.] With a peculiar earneſtneſs, *Above all things* This refers to, (1.) His guarding them againſt impatience, ver. 10, 11. When once men let their paſſion looſe, and loſe their patience, they are apt to break out into blaſphemies, horrid oaths, and curſes. (2.) To a corrupt cuſtom prevailing among the Jews of cuſtomary ſwearing, and therefore hardly to be rooted out: which he would therefore have them with the utmoſt care and diligence to ſet themſelves againſt.

2. A plain direction as to mens ordinary converſe. In oppoſition to the larding of your converſation with ſuch profane mixtures, let your ſpeech be plain and ſimple, conſiſting of plain affirmations or denials, without theſe unhallowed additions. If ye mind to aſſert a thing, which is yea, then ſay, *Yea*, or *Yes*, or, It is ſo. If ye mean to deny a thing, which is nay, then ſay, *Nay*, or, It is not ſo.

3. A motive preſſing both the caveat and direction, *Leſt ye fall into condemnation;* Gr. *judgement, under judge-*

* The author has a ſet of Sermons on this text, preached alſo at Ettrick in 1707, but not yet published.

*judgement.* He looks to the third command, of God's *not holding guiltleſs him that taketh his Name in vain.* God will be avenged on thoſe that do otherwiſe, and ye will fall under his judgement on that ſcore, if ye purge not your language from theſe things.

The text affords three doctrines

DOCT. I. Profane ſwearing is a horrid evil, with the utmoſt watchfulneſs to be avoided by all Chriſtians.

DOCT. II God requires mens ſpeech in their ordinary converſe to be plain and ſimple, as yea and nay, without unhallowed additions, of the nature of oaths.

DOCT. III Profane ſwearing, and the like ungodly ſpeeches akin thereto, will make the guilty fall under the fearful judgement of God.

I ſhall proſecute each doctrine in order.

DOCT I. Profane ſwearing is a horrid evil, with the utmoſt watchfulneſs to be avoided by all Chriſtians.

Profane ſwearing is of two ſorts; ſwearing by God or Chriſt, and by creatures.

*Firſt*, Swearing by God himſelf, and by Chriſt who is God. Such ſwearing is duty, when the matter is of weight, and men are call'd thereto of God, Heb vi. 16. Jer. iv. 2. But it is profane when men ſwear by God or Chriſt.

1 Falſely, Mal iii 5. This is perjury, which is a falſehood confirmed by an oath, a breach at once of the third and ninth command. Sometimes people are called to ſwear, by authority, and ſwearing falſely in that caſe they are guilty of perjury. Sometimes they are not called to ſwear, but of their own accord, without any juſt call, they ſwear, and ſwear what is falſe. This is doubtleſs perjury as well as the other, being a ſwearing falſely.

Perjury is an open affronting of an omniſcient juſt God, and is near akin to Atheiſm. It is a calling of God to be witneſs to a lie, a playing with revenging

juſtice,

juſtice, a daring of Heaven's vengeance, a wilful devoting of one's ſoul to deſtruction. For in an oath men invocate God to judge them, according to the truth or falſehood of what they ſwear. It looſeth the bond of human ſociety, and deſervedly makes men infamous, and binds over the party to the fearful judgements of God, Zech. v. 4. "I will bring it forth, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of the thief, and into the houſe of him that ſweareth falſely by my name: and it ſhall remain in the midſt of his houſe, and ſhall conſume it, with the timber thereof, and the ſtones thereof." Mal. iii. 5 "I will come near to you to judgement, and I will be a ſwift witneſs againſt—falſe ſwearers."

2. Vainly, raſhly, and uſually, in common converſe, without any juſt call, whether the thing ſworn be true or falſe, good or bad, Matth. v. 34. 37 This is that ſwearing ſo frequent among thoſe called Chriſtians. Some have a God thus to ſwear by, though not a God to pray to; as if they would own no God, but to diſhonour his name. Others have found the art of joining Chriſt and Belial ſo, that one while they will be praying to God, and another while ſwearing by his holy name profanely, Jam. iii. 10. "Out of the ſame mouth proceedeth bleſſing and curſing."

This is a horrid evil. It is,

(1.) A flat contradiction to the letter of the law, even as murder and adultery is, *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Many ways the commands are broken, though one do not directly tranſgreſs the letter of them: ſo is the third command by a hypocritical profeſſion: but profane ſwearers croſs the letter.

(2.) It is a profanation of a holy thing, which is very dangerous, Lev. xix. 8.; an uſing that for a common uſe, which God has ſet apart for a holy uſe only. And, [1.] It is a profanation of the holy name, which is awful, reverend, and holy, Lev. xxii. 32. It is a proſtituting of that tremendous name to

ſerve mens luſts and paſſions [2] It is a profanation of an holy ordinance of worſhip, appointed of God to be uſed holily and reverently, with hands lifted up to heaven, upon juſt and weighty cauſes, and a due call, to be an end of ſtrife in matters which cannot be otherwiſe cleared than by invocating God as witneſs, Jer. iv. 2. "Thou ſhalt ſwear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgement, and in righteouſneſs."—Would it not make one's heart tremble, to ſee men profane the ſacraments by a common uſage of them? An oath is an holy ordinance inſtituted by God, as well as the ſacraments. How then do men fearleſsly bring ſwearing into common uſe in their common converſation?

(3.) It argues a profane contempt of God, Pſal. xxxvi. 1, 3. An ordinary meaſure of the fear of God on the heart, would keep a man from profane ſwearing by his name; and the conſciences of common ſwearers may witneſs that they would take it hainouſly, if others ſhould deal as freely and ordinarily with their names, as they do with the name of the God that made them.

*Secondly*, Swearing by creatures. The Papiſts worſhip creatures, and conſequentially enough think it lawful to ſwear by the creatures they worſhip; as by the holy bread of the ſacrament, the bread of God; and no wonder, for they worſhip it; and by St. Mary, for they worſhip her too. But how many Proteſtants are there, who though in their principles they are againſt giving divine worſhip to any creature, yet do in contradiction thereto ſwear by creatures, as by their *faith*, *troth* or *truth*, *ſoul*, *conſcience*, &c. This is in no caſe lawful, but in every caſe profane ſwearing.

1. It is ſacrilege and idolatry. It is a taking away from God the worſhip due to him alone, and giving it to the creature, Matth. iv. 10. compared with Deut. vi. 13. Swearing is an invocating of the object ſworn by to be witneſs of the truth of what we affirm

affirm or deny, to judge and punish us in case we swear falsely, Jer. v 7. Is your faith, troth, &c. God? No: but you make these idols. And an idol is nothing in the world. It is likely it is even so with your faith, &c. Many hug their faith, troth, &c. so in their mouths by swearing, till their consciences are seared, and neither faith nor truth is left them.

2. These things having a relation to God, the dishonour reaches to him: they are his works, and being so profaned, his name is profaned. *Heaven is God's throne, and the earth his footstool*, Matth. v. 34. 35. and therefore are not to be sworn by, according to our Saviour's reasoning. So may we say, Faith is the gift of God, truth his image, the soul his creature in a special manner, who is the Father of spirits, conscience the candle of the Lord. God's deputy in the soul: and therefore are not to be sworn by.

3. They are not so our own, that we can engage them by an oath, for the least change to be made upon them, Matth. v. 36. In these oaths men do impawn their faith, truth, soul, conscience, to lose them, if it be not, so as they say. And is this a small matter? Where have we such dominion and power over these things, as thus on every trifle to lay them in pawn? Hezekiah broke the brazen serpent when abused to idolatry. Take heed God do not so break and destroy thy soul, while thus played with?

4. It is a horrid abuse of these precious things. Is that faith, by which thou must be saved, or damned without it, no more precious in thine eyes, than thus to make a by-word of it? Is that truth, without which thou art lost with the father of lies, no more to be regarded? Is that soul which could not be redeemed but by the blood of Christ, and that conscience which could no other way be purged, to be thus used?

5. *Lastly*, Swearing by the creatures was ordinary among Pagans, and heretics were the first after the Jews that brought it in among Christians; and Papists, as has been said, maintain it as a principle agreeable

to their idolatry. Oh! that men professing Christ and his truth, would be ashamed of them!

USE. I dehort you from swearing, either by God or Christ vainly, without a lawful call, or by the creature in any case. Avoid all swearing in common converse. Let such as have got a custom of it, leave it off; and those who yet are free, watch against it. I offer the following motives to enforce this dehortation.

*Mot.* 1. It is highly dishonouring to God, and provoking in his sight. He hath said, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*, &c. Whether we consider him as our Creator to whom we owe all reverence, or as our Saviour who has been our Helper, and offers us again the forfeited life and salvation, it is horrible. To hear men profaning the name of that God, who made them, gave them a tongue, life, &c. profaning that name by which they must be saved, or else perish, is frightful. They are made to differ from brutes, by a soul and conscience; and faith and truth makes men saints, differing from other men: how dishonouring is it to God to profane these?

*Mot.* 2. It is scandalous with respect to our neighbour; and that is no small aggravation of the guilt, Matth. xviii. 7. "Woe unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." Men swear speaking to others ordinarily. And if they that hear them be godly, it wounds them, and grieves them to the heart; and that is dangerous, Matth. xviii 6. "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." If they be ungodly and profane, it hardens them, and is apt to breed more contempt of God in them. If men be but sober, it is misbecoming to them. Many a time it is a snare, involving others in guilt,

always

always giving a bad example, and ſo tending to ruin the ſouls of others, Rom. xiv. 13, 15.

*Mot.* 3. It is deviliſh in reſpect of the ſmallneſs of the temptation there is to it. Profit draws the thief to ſteal, the unjuſt to cheat, the oppreſſor to oppreſs. Pleaſure ensnares men into gluttony, drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, and other ſenſualities. But what profit or pleaſure is to be found in ſwearing? What fruit brings it in, but the abhorrence of the ſober, and the fearful judgements of God? Which of your ſenſes does it gratify? Other ſinners ſerve the devil for pay; but the ſwearer as a volunteer, for nought.

*Mot laſt*, It is ruining, ruining to the ſoul. (1.) It makes havock of the ſoul's caſe. It wears off tenderneſs, makes a profane heart, inſenſible of duty to God. A cuſtom of ſwearing ſears and ſtupifies the conſcience. (2.) It will ruin the ſoul for ever, and bring wrath upon the guilty. Sometimes it brings viſible judgements upon men on the earth, whereof there have been many fearful inſtances. However, if they repent not, it will ruin them in another world, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. "If thou wilt not obſerve to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayſt fear this glorious and fearful Name, The LORD thy GOD; then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy ſeed, even great plagues, and of long continuance."

DOCT. II. God requires mens ſpeech in their ordinary converſe to be plain and ſimple, as yea and nay, without unhallowed additions of the nature of oaths.

This plainneſs and ſimplicity of ſpeech in ordinary converſe, we may take a view of in theſe two particulars.

*Firſt*, It conſiſts in mens accuſtoming themſelves to plain and ſimple aſſerting or denying of things, according to their judgement; and not lightly bringing in ſacred things to confirm what they ſay, or vent their paſſion.

paſſion. This is ſufficient to anſwer the ends of common converſation, *Yea, Yea indeed, Truly*, &c. and obtains among tender perſons, who are moſt regardful of truth.

*Secondly*, It excludes out of ſpeech in common converſation, all that which is akin to oaths, where there is no ſufficient call thereunto. And ſo it condemns not only all expreſs ſwearing by God or the creatures, but,

1. All minced oaths, where the form of ſwearing is not uſed, but ſuppreſſed. Yet one may plainly perceive the words, if they have any ſenſe at all, or be of the nature of ſwearing; as *Good faith, faith, hath, hat', fa' d' ye, Mary*, &c. Of theſe ſome have ſuch a cuſtom, that they can ſpeak few ſentences without them.

(1.) Though one could not be convinced that theſe things are evil, yet he cannot miſs the conviction that they are evil-like. And you can never think that it is duty to God or your neighbour to ſpeak ſo. On this very ground ye ought to forbear them, 1 Theſſ. v. 22. "Abſtain from all appearance of evil." Jude 23. "—Hating even the garments ſpotted by the fleſh." Whoſo will not ſhun appearances of evil, will eaſily venture on real evils.

(2.) I appeal to your conſciences, whether theſe be the language of the moſt tender and ſerious ſort of Chriſtians, or of profane men and rough untender profeſſors; and whether or not the more tender any one is in their walk, their ſpeech is purged from theſe. Let that then have weight with you, ſpoken by the apoſtle, Phil iv. 9 "Thoſe things which ye have both learned and received and heard and ſeen in me, do."

(3.) They are offenſive to the ſerious godly; they grate on their ears, as the language of hell. It is grievous to them to hear men who are baptized in the name of Chriſt, ſpeaking half the language of Canaan, and half that of Aſhdod. And on this ſcore

ſcore they are dangerous, Matth. xviii 6, 7. forecited.

(4.) At beſt they are idle words, and therefore ſinful What good purpoſe do they ſerve for? Are they of any uſe for God's honour, your own good, or the good of thoſe with whom ye converſe? Conſider therefore that declaration, Matth. xii 36. "I ſay unto you, That every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

(5.) They are more than yea and nay, and of another kind; and ſo are condemned in our text. And ye muſt either make minced oaths of them, or ye cannot make ſenſe of them. Is not *Good faith is't*, &c. more, and of another kind, than *Yea it is?* Take heed of them then, leſt ye fall into condemnation. Is downright profane ſwearing a thing that it is ſuch a pity to be deprived of the liberty of, that ye muſt needs retain ſome remains of it with you?

But ſome may be ready to ſay, They are but little ſins. *Anſ.* Every ſin deſerves God's wrath; and there is none ſo little, but they will ruin you for ever, if they be not waſhed away by the Redeemer's blood, as one little leak will ſink the ſhip. Gal. iii. 10. "Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" If they are but little, how wilt thou do a great thing for God, that wilt not pleaſe him in ſuch a ſmall matter? Alas! if they be little, they are not few. Many grains make a mountain, and many drops an ocean. If one be drowned, it is all a caſe to him, whether it be in a ſmall water or in the ocean.

2. All light or irreverent uſing of the name of God. His name is dreadful, and requires to be mentioned with profound reverence: and it will be found, that thoſe who have leaſt of God in their hearts, have moſt of his name interpoſed in their common talk. If the Mahometans find a piece of paper, they take it up, and put it in the hole of a wall; becauſe the name of God may be written on it. Alas! if paper were put

in

in the holes of walls, at every time the name of God is profaned among Christians, the holes of the walls would soon be full It is profaned,

(1.) In exclamations, where the holy name is interposed at any little thing untender persons wonder at, are vexed about, or seem to fear Hence some cry, O God! O Lord! some, God bless us, save us, guide us, forgive us! Christ or Lord have a care of us: God be wi' you; which is an ordinary salutation. What! (may some say) may we not pray to God to bless us, and be with our neighbours, *&c.? Ans* Yes, indeed; but then ye should use them in a praying manner, with holy reverence, answerable affections, faith in the blood of Christ, as praying indeed. Of which we have an example, Ruth ii. 4. "And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you: and they answered him, The Lord bless thee." But to prostitute that name to give a vent to your foolish passions, to use these things with a rashness and irreverence, is profane. God's blessing, *&c.* are matters of greatest weight; and those who are most concerned for them, will not seek them that way.

(2.) In permissions; as, *Let him do it in God's name.* I know no face can be put on this as it is used in common talk, but a profanation of that holy name. And I dare say, it is not used by those who walk up and down in the name of the Lord, and that remember his name is dreadful.

(3.) In obsecrations or entreaties; as, For God's sake, For God's love &c. For Christ's sake, &c. No doubt, according to the scripture, these things may be used in weighty matters, so it be with due reverence; but in trifles it is profane. Let them be things that concern one's life or salvation, that ye will entreat for that way; and when ye do it, let it appear you have the awe of God on your spirits. But interpose not the holy name at every trifle.

(4.) In

(4) In appeals to God in light matters; matters of no seriousness; as, *God knows*. The omniscience of God is a matter of great importance, and his people may take the comfort of it under reproaches which otherwise they cannot fully clear themselves of before the world. But lightly to appeal to that Judge, is the way to bring wrath on the appellant. The serious thoughts of God's knowledge, may make the best to tremble; and strike such dread on the worst, as they may not make a light matter of it. We find indeed such an appeal made by the apostle, 2 Cor xii 3. but it was in a serious weighty affair, which none knew but God. But what is that to a profane use of it in trifles, which perhaps many do know?

3. All asseverations of the nature of oaths; as, *As I am a Christian, have a soul to be saved.* That these are akin to oaths, is evident from that form of an oath used by God himself, *As I live, saith the Lord:* and therefore they are not to be used in common conversation. And as oaths they imply an imprecation, viz. Let me not be reckoned a Christian, Let me not have a soul to be saved. And none will therefore, in common conversation use them, who have a due value for Christianity, and the salvation of their souls.

4. Cursing, whereby one imprecates evil on himself or others, whether absolutely or conditionally, if they do not so and so. And the more solemn and deliberate it is, it is the worse. This is one of the characters of a wicked man, Psal x. 7. "His mouth is full of cursing." There are three ways whereby men utter this language of hell.

(1.) Sometimes God is expressly invocated in the curse. Thus profane men will invocate God to damn them, confound them, or curse themselves or others. This speaks a profane contempt of God, a defiance of his curse and eternal wrath: and surely their damnation, as it will be just, so it will be dreadful, and the more cutting to their consciences through eternity, that they have prayed for it.

(2.) Some-

(2.) Sometimes the name of God is ſuppreſſed, but the curſe belched out. So ſome will wiſh that themſelves or others may break their neck, that an ill chance, woe, or ſhame may light on them. Theſe are curſes indeed, wherein though the name of God is ſuppreſſed, yet he is called to execute their wicked wiſhes againſt themſelves or others, foraſmuch as theſe muſt be the effects of divine providence, if they be at all.

(3.) Sometimes the devil is invocated in the curſe. And thus many are found oftener praying to the devil to take themſelves or others, than to God, to ſave them. They cannot deny a thing, but the name of the devil muſt be in it. And the devil has ſeveral names given him to ſerve this purpoſe, as *Foul Fiend*, &c.

Thus I have raked in this dunghill for your warning and reformation; and by what is ſaid ye may judge of other things of this nature, which I have not named. It is a plain rule againſt all theſe, *Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay.* I proceed to

DOCT ult. *Profane ſwearing, and the like ungodly ſpeeches akin thereto, will make the guilty fall under the fearful judgment of God.* So the third commandment threatens.

The import of this, we may take up in the following things.

1 However lightly men look on theſe, and overlook them, God writes them down guilty upon every ſuch profane ſpeech. There is a book of remembrance written with God, whereby none of them all ſhall be loſt. Mens Judge is their witneſs in theſe as in other things; and if they muſt fall under condemnation for them ſurely they are remembered. *For*, ſays our Lord, *by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned*, Matth. xii. 37.

2 God will call men to a reckoning for them ſooner or later. Though they may now paſs without a challenge, the time will come that they will get deep chal-

challenges for them, either in mercy or in wrath. Their words that they think light of now, ſhall ſome time lie like a talent of lead on their conſciences, and pierce them like ſwords, Matth. xii. 36 "Every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Jude 16.

3 If ever they get the pardon of them, they ſhall be made to condemn themſelves for them, and be cut to the heart for the ſin and ſcandal of them, and go with a bowed down back on account of that profanation of the holy name, and their ungodly ſpeeches of the nature of oaths, 1 Tim. i 13.

4. *Laſtly*, If men get not the pardon of them by faith, if they repent not of them, and reform, they ſhall fall under eternal condemnation by the weight of the guilt of them, Matth. xii. 37. forecited.

I conclude with an uſe of exhortation.

I exhort you to purify and keep clean your ſpeech, that *your yea may be yea, and your nay, nay;* and that you will beware of profane ſwearing by God or the creatures, all curſing, light and irreverent uſe of the holy name, and all ſpeeches whatſoever of the nature of profane ſwearing. For motives, conſider,

1. God is a God of glorious majeſty, infinitely above us and all creatures in his perfections: therefore he is to be feared by us; Job xxv. 2. "Dominion and fear are with him. Pſal. lxxxix. 7 God is greatly to be feared,—and to be had in reverence" His name is reverend and holy; and what he has made ſacred, it is high preſumption in us to profane, Mal. i. 14. *My name is dreadful*, ſays he. The angels adore it, the devils tremble at it; and ſhall only men trample it under foot without fear? He has fenced about the honour of his name with an awful hedge, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59 "If thou wilt not obſerve to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayeſt fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God; then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the

plagues of thy ſeed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and ſore ſickneſſes, and of long continuance." Let his terror make men afraid to break over this hedge.

2. Ye are God's debtors for the uſe of your tongue, and it is your glory that ye can ſpeak with it. Turn it not againſt him who gave it you, by your ungodly ſpeeches. He gave you a faculty of ſpeaking for his own glory and your comfort: he might have prevented your ſwearing, curſing, &c. by cauſing you to have been born dumb. And yet it is in his hand when he will, to take the uſe of your tongue from you; and ſo to lay the ſwearing tongue even before death lay it.

3. This is a ſin that debaucheth the conſcience in a particular manner, raiſing out of it any tolerable reverence of God. It is hard to ſay, that it is the ſpot of God's children, Pſal. cxxxix. 20. Many otherwiſe looſe men have had a horror of it, the natural conſcience ſtartling at that ſin to which there is ſo very little temptation. But thoſe who are once engaged in a courſe of it, ſeldom get it laid aſide: ſo that whereas many who are otherwiſe very extravagant in their youth, afterwards take up themſelves; it is often ſeen that this grows grayheaded with thoſe who have addicted themſelves to it. The cuſtom in it takes away the ſenſe of it, ſo that it becomes in a manner natural to them: and hence it comes out with them, ere ever they are aware, their tongue being ſo ſet on the ſwearing or curſing run, that in that ſort of ſpeech it outruns the mind. A ſad evidence of a hardened heart and ſeared conſcience.

4. I obſerved before, that it was deviliſh ſin. I ſhall here add, that it is in a peculiar manner helliſh. There are many ſins which this life will put an end to; there will be no gluttony, drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, &c. in hell: but will there be no profaning of the holy name neither nor curſing there? Yea, there will; that is a ſin that will go along with the curſed company to the pit, and will be carried to a height,

and

and carried on there, Rev. xvi. 21. And an eternity will be long enough to give men their fill of ſuch ſpeech. In the nature of ſome ſins there is ſomething pleaſant to the corrupt nature, which being mixed with that poiſonous cup, makes ſinners greedily drink it off: but curſing and ſwearing are in their nature malicious, and can afford no pleaſure even to corrupt nature, unleſs it ariſe from the opening of the mouth againſt the heavens, and natively come from a heart rankled and fretted, which will be the lot of ſinners ſignally in hell, where they will weep, roar, gnaſh their teeth, and blaſpheme.

5. It is a ſin that brings down wrath in a ſpecial manner,

(1.) On a land, Hoſ. iv. 1, 2. "The Lord hath a "controverſy with the inhabitants of the land, becauſe "there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God "in the land. By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, "and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, "and blood toucheth blood. Jer. v. 7, 9 How ſhall I "pardon thee for this? thy children have forſaken me, "and ſworn by them that are no gods. Shall I not "viſit for theſe things? ſaith the Lord: and ſhall not "my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?" It is a burden to the Spirit of God, to the ſpirits of his people, and makes a land to mourn, Jer. xxiii. 10. "Becauſe of ſwearing the land mourneth." And none needs doubt but the falſe-ſwearing, the for-ſwearing, and profane ſwearing in common converſe, in this generation, will make Scotland mourn. How can a land miſs a flame of wrath, in which are ſo many tongues ſet on fire of hell?

(2.) On families, to conſume and root them out from the earth, Zech. v 3, 4. "This is the curſe that goeth "forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one "that ſtealeth, ſhall be cut off as on this ſide, according "to it: and every one that ſweareth, ſhall be cut off "as on that ſide, according to it. I will bring it forth, "ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe

" of the thief, and into the houſe of him that ſweareth " falſely by my name: and it ſhall remain in the midſt " of his houſe, and ſhall conſume it, with the timber " thereof, and the ſtones thereof." It brings a curſe that a houſe cannot long ſtand under. And therefore maſters of families ſhould take heed to themſelves, and to children and ſervants addicted to this ſin, as to thoſe who would bring down the houſe about their ears. Many times things go wrong not for want of diligence, but there is a ſecret curſe for this and other ſins that blaſts them.

(3.) On the particular perſons; on their bodies, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. forecited. On their ſouls too. See the text. Will idle words ruin men for ever? how much more profane ſwearing and curſing words? Have pity on your own ſouls, and ſacrifice them not to a wicked tongue. Remember the rich man in hell, whoſe tongue was tormented in that flame. Heavy judgements have been before the world inflicted on ſuch perſons, Pſal. lxiv. 7. 8. 9. " God ſhall ſhoot at them with an arrow, ſuddenly ſhall they be wounded. So they ſhall make their own tongue to fall upon themſelves: all that ſee them, ſhall flee away. And all men ſhall fear, and ſhall declare the work of God; for they ſhall wiſely conſider of his doing."

6. As it is a ſcandalous ſin, ſo it is eſpecially a ſcandal, *i. e.* a ſtumbling block, to the riſing generation. It was heavy to Nehemiah, chap. xiii. 24, 25. but he ſoon ſaw where the blame lay. And is it not lamentable to hear young ones among us, as they begin to ſpeak, to begin to curſe and ſwear; and as they grow in years, to grow in this helliſh art? How do they learn it but from the elder people? They learn to curſe and ſwear at thoſe who learn them to ſpeak, at their fathers and mothers, or profane ſervants, or young ones like themſelves, who learn it at home. Thus theſe ſinners tranſmit their ſin from generation to generation; and when ye ſhall be dead and gone the curſing and ſwearing ſet afoot by you ſhall remain

and

and be going on; and consequently your guilt shall be increased after ye are away.

7. Your tongue shall either be for ever employed in praising God in heaven, or blaspheming in hell. I beseech you soberly consider, whether going on in a course of cursing and swearing, you look likest to have the one or the other for your lot. Is it a preparation for heaven or for hell?

8 To forbear cursing, swearing, and profaning the name of God, is but a small attainment in religion. Some, by their education, who never yet had saving grace, have been kept free from these things. And the reforming thereof will but bring you out from among the number of the profane. If it is such a matter for you to reform in that point, which is but in the outward man; what way will ye come to reform the heart-lusts that belong to the inner man? But ye must have pure hearts and clean hands too, else ye will never see heaven.

9. *Lastly*, Consider the life and death of Jesus, both which were for glorifying that name, which ye profane. His speech was *verily, verily*, i. e. truly, truly. All his life-time he was blaspemed, and particularly by the thief on the cross, which was a part of his sufferings. Why will ye go on thus to crucify the Lord of glory afresh?

Now I shall endeavour to obviate some shifts, whereby sinners endeavour to sooth themselves, and ward off conviction and serious thoughts of reformation in this point.

1. These things are very common; and there are few that have not an use of some of them: therefore we need not think so much of them

*Ans.* The more common the worse, as the diseases are which turn epidemic. God commands you to turn back from following the multitude, which are in conspiracy against him, trampling on his laws, Exod. xxiii. 2. And men must either cease to sin with the multitude, or perish with them, Matth. vii. 13.

Rev. iii. 4. If it be ill with you, ye think it will be ill with many a one; and ſo it will. But it will be no comfort to go to hell with company, if we may believe the rich man there, Luke xvi. If men think that, going to hell by troops, they will be conquerors, and not ſufferers, they will be wretchedly diſappointed.

2. But ſeveral good people have an uſe of theſe things; and we find Peter curſed and ſwore.

*Anſ.* Peter under a violent fit of temptation fell into that ſnare, and with the ſame breath denied his part in Chriſt: but he repented bitterly for it, and reformed. Do ye ſo too, and ye ſhall do well. There are many whom the world counts good people, whom God never counted ſo. You may ſee how the heart-ſearching God reckons in this caſe Pſal. cxxxix. 20. "They ſpeak againſt thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain." Pſal. x 7. *His mouth is full of curſing.* If there be any ſuch good people, ye have much to reckon for that pick out their blemiſhes, and follow them; and they alſo have much to account for, who lay a ſtumbling-block before the blind But it is God's word and not mens practice, that is the rule of our life. and that we will be judged by, 1 Cor. xi. 1. *Be ye followers of me,* ſays the apoſtle, *even as I alſo am of Chriſt.*

3. We have no ill in our minds, when we uſe theſe words; they juſt come out raſhly.

*Anſ.* Ill words are certainly the product of an ill heart, Matth. xii. 34. Mark vii. 21, 22. But alas! moſt men are ſtrangers to the ill of their hearts, Jer xliv. 20. They that murdered Chriſt's diſciples, John xvi. and Saul, 1 Sam xv when he ſpared Agag, and the cattle of the Amalekites, might have pretended that they had no ill in their minds; yet the former were murderers, and the latter a rebel to God. It is God's law, and not mens deſigns, that is the rule of their words and actions. The tongue is an unruly member, and they that ſpeak raſhly with it, cannot ſpeak well. Ye are obliged to watch it, and bridle

bridle it. This was David's practice, Pſal. xxxix 1. "I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me." Your raſhneſs is your ſin, and one ſin will not excuſe another. Good Moſes was kept out of Canaan for his rath ſpeaking, Pſal. cvi. 31, 32 They ſpoke raſhly who made excuſes for not coming to the marriage of the King's ſon, Luke xiv; and ſee the effect of it, ver. 24. *I ſay unto you, that none of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.* Let the awe of God be on your hearts, and it will prevent that raſhneſs.

4. But what matter of the devil's name how it be uſed? ſure it is not holy.

*Anſ* He is the enemy of God, and our ſouls enemy; and an intercommuned ſpirit, whom we are not allowed to ſpeak to without a ſpecial call. How then dare men adventure to call on him to do this or that, as to take themſelves or others? and in their words to give things to him, if it were a bit, as *Devil a bit, Fiend a bit?* It is known this is the very thing he ſeeks from his drudges, that they call him to do this or that for them; and that they offer him ſomething, be it ever ſo little. But the love and fear of God would teach you, that "Their ſorrows ſhall be multiplied, that haſten after another god: and that you ſhould not take up their names into your lips," Pſal xvi. 4.

5. Well, it is but ſeldom I fall into theſe things.

*Anſ.* Now and then ſinning will coſt everlaſting deſtruction, if repentance prevent it not. You are allowed no time for theſe things, but they are forbidden you always. But a common ſwearer getting grace to repent and reform, is in the way of ſalvation, while the man that ſees no need of repentance, becauſe he is but ſeldom guilty, will periſh. Stop however in time, leſt your ſeldom turned to ordinary, be turned to a confirmed cuſtom.

6. But all theſe things are but words, and we hope God will not be ſo ſevere for words.

*Anſ.* It

*Anſ.* It is a ſad hope that is kept up over the belly of God's truth. Here is God's word, Matth. xii. 37. *By thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.* Muſt not either God's word or your hope fall then? Read the doom of ſuch good hopers, Deut. xxix 19, 20. "And it come to paſs when he heareth the words of this curſe, that he bleſs himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenneſs to thirſt: the Lord will not ſpare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealouſy ſhall ſmoke againſt that man, and all the curſes that are written in this book ſhall lie upon him, and the Lord ſhall blot out his name from under heaven." And that ye may aſſure yourſelves, God will be as ſevere for theſe things, as it is ſaid of him from the word, ſee Zech. v 2, 3. "And he ſaid unto me, What ſeeſt thou? And I anſwered, I ſee a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. Then ſaid he unto me, This is the curſe that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that ſtealeth, ſhall be cut off as on this ſide, according to it; and every one that ſweareth, ſhall be cut off as on that ſide, according to it" Compare 1 Kings vi. 3.

7. I neither curſe nor ſwear, but when I am provoked.

*Anſ* (1.) Where is your patience, in which ye are called to poſſeſs your ſouls? Luke xxi. 19. The proper ſeaſon of exerciſing it is when ye are provoked. Will it excuſe your curſing and ſwearing, that in the firſt place ye caſt off patience? (2) I hope it is not God who provokes you, is it? Will a man tear his own fleſh, or ſtab his deareſt friend to the heart, becauſe an enemy provokes him? Yet you will ſet your mouths againſt the heavens, becauſe a fellow-worm diſobliges you. However, if men will curſe and ſwear, being provoked, they may aſſure themſelves that God will deſtroy them for it, being provoked with their curſing and ſwearing. Jer. v. 7, 9. fore-

forecited —But fleſh and blood is not able to abide the provocations I meet with. *Anſ. Fleſh and blood ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.* They are fleſh and blood as well as ye, that bear as great provocations.

8 I have got a cuſtom of it, and it is out with me ere ever I am aware.

*Anſ* The greater is your ſin that you have a cuſtom of it. You are like thoſe, Jer. ix. 5. "They have taught their tongue to ſpeak lies, and weary themſelves to commit iniquity." Sure ye were not born curſing and ſwearing as breathing: but ye have learned it. Ye learned that cuſtom at the inſtigation of the devil; unlearn it again at God's call. Is not that thief, that murderer, that has got a cuſtom of it, eſteemed by you the worſt of thieves and murderers? And are not you who have got a cuſtom of curſing and ſwearing, the worſt of curſers and ſwearers? How dreadful muſt your caſe be, and how like the devil, to whom it is become juſt natural to profane the holy name! Look to it in time, for it is next door to a deſperate caſe. Some have died curſing and ſwearing, the thief on the croſs blaſpheming, others roaring out horrid oaths. Now what do ye know but ye may die roving, without the exerciſe of your judgement? Would it be any thing ſtrange, that ye who have a cuſtom of curſing and ſwearing, ſhould in that caſe go off the world, ſpeaking according to your cuſtom?

9. But it is no ſooner out but I regret it, I repent of it.

*Anſ.* But do ye reform it? Ye regret it; ſo did Pharaoh. ſo did Judas; but they mended not, till they were ended; and ſo I doubt not many in hell this day are regretting what they did and ſpoke on earth. Ye repent of it, but ſtill ye go back with the dog to the vomit, and with the ſow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire. What repentance is that? Hearken to the call of God, Ezek. xviii. 30, 31. "Therefore I will judge you, O houſe of Iſrael, every one according to his ways, ſaith the Lord God:

God: repent, and turn yourſelves from all your tranſgreſſions; ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruin. Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions whereby ye have tranſgreſſed, and make you a new heart and a new ſpirit; for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?" It is a ſad ſign, that it has never been bitter enough to you to this day; and ye may even ſay with the drunkard, Prov. xxiii *ult.* "They have ſtricken me, and I was not ſick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when ſhall I awake? I will ſeek it yet again."

10 *Laſtly*, I have often reſolved againſt it, but I find I cannot help it.

*Anſ* It ſeems you have never ſtruck at the root of it, the ſin of your nature, Pſal. xxxvi. 1. Ye have never gone about it in faith, Pſal. cxli. 3. But, withal, the abſtaining from profaning the holy name of God, by curſing and ſwearing, and reforming a cuſtom of that, is but an act of moral diſcipline, not beyond the power of a natural man. I make no queſtion, but a ſixpence for every oath would at length carry you over that cuſtom. But be it ſo, that you cannot help it: I aſk you, whether or no you deſire to have it helped? And ſo I cloſe with ſome directions.

1. Go to Chriſt in the way of believing, that he may help it, 1 Tim i 13, 14. There is help in Chriſt for it: there is a fulneſs of merit in him to remove the guilt of it, and of the Spirit to remove the power of it. He is lifted up on the pole of the goſpel to be looked to for juſtification of our perſons, and ſanctification of our natures. There is virtue in him for curing us of all our heart and life plagues, thoſe running ſores not excepted, which have ſpurned all other remedies. Mind the woman in the goſpel, of whom it is ſaid, Luke viii. 43. 44. "And a woman having an iſſue of blood twelve years, which had ſpent all her living upon phyſicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her iſſue of blood ſtanched."

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He is the great Phyſician, and heals all diſeaſes of the ſoul, Pſal. ciii 3. No diſeaſe is the reproach of this Phyſician. He is by office Saviour of the world, and your Saviour, 1 John iv. 14. and he ſaves thoſe who employ him from their ſins, Matth. i. 21. And it is your following other methods of cure, and not going to Chriſt by faith for it, that makes that running ſore in you to ſeem incurable. For all other means but the blood and Spirit of Chriſt applied by faith, ſerve but to ſkin over the ſore, after which it is ready to break out again.

*Queſt.* How ſhall I make uſe of Chriſt in the way of believing for the remedy of this evil?

*Anſ.* (1.) Believe that he is held forth and offered to you in the goſpel with all his ſalvation, and particularly his ſalvation from that ſin, Iſa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none elſe." This is the conſtant voice of the goſpel, Rev. xxii. 17. "And the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth, ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt, come: And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Jeſus Chriſt crucified is by the oppointment of God the great ordinance of heaven for the ſanctification of ſinners, and healing them of all ſpiritual plagues; being made of God unto them *ſanctification*, 1 Cor. i. 30.

(2.) Truſt on him for his whole ſalvation, upon the ground of the divine faithfulneſs plighted in the promiſe. Believe that he will by his grace ſave you from all your guilt, and all your ſin, and that in particular. This has the promiſe of ſalvation. Acts. xvi. 31. 'Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.' Not only kept out of hell hereafter, but immediately on your believing ſaved from all your ſpiritual plagues whatſoever; ſo that the guilt of eternal wrath ſhall no more lie on you for them, nor the reigning power of them be any more unbroken. The ground of this confidence you have, John iii. 16. "Whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life"

But

But this truſt muſt be on him for all: for faith looks to Chriſt for his whole ſalvation.

(3.) Make uſe of the means of reformation in the faith of the promiſe, 2 Tim ii. 1. "Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus." The promiſe you have Micah vii. 19. "He will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us: he will ſubdue our iniquities: and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the ſea." To uſe the means without taking along the faith of the promiſe is atheiſtical: to pretend to believe the promiſe without care of uſing the means is preſumptuous. Now the proper means may be theſe

2. Labour to impreſs your hearts deeply with a ſenſe of the ill of theſe things. You have heard much about them. Be ſo juſt to your own ſouls as to conſider the matter impartially Weigh your profanations of the holy name, *&c.* in the balance of the word. They will never rightly reform that ſee not the ugly nature of their ſin.

3. Devote your hearts, lips, and lives to the Lord, 1 Cor. vi. *ult.* Learn to uſe your tongues for God, and his honour in the world: for they who uſe them not for him, can hardly miſs to uſe them againſt him. There is no neutrality in that caſe.

4. Labour to get your hearts poſſeſſed habitually with dread and reverence of the majeſty of God; and with a due value for your own ſouls, and love to your neighbour. The former will keep you from profane ſwearing, *&c.*; and the latter from curſing yourſelves or others.

5. Watch and pray. Keep a guard over your tongues, and lift up your hearts to the Lord, in the language of David, Pſal cxli. 3. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips." Be not raſh to ſpeak, but conſider before hand.

6. *Laſtly*, Set about the reformation of your whole life at once. Put all the idols to the door at once, as thieves and robbers, elſe thoſe remaining will open the door to thoſe which ye put out. Guard againſt paſſion, be meek and calm.

THE

THE

# Distinguishing Characters

OF

# TRUE BELIEVERS.

## IV. In relation to their Meekness, as an Evidence of great Understanding, and the Folly of Passionateness *.

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PROVERBS xiv. 29.

*He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit, exalteth folly.*

THERE is a great affinity betwixt sinful anger, and cursing, swearing, profanation of the name of God. It is the mother, and they are the daughters ordinarily; though in all it does not bring them forth, yet they are hardly to be found with a meek and quiet spirit.

The scope of these words is to beat down sinful anger, a common evil, producing much mischief. And in them,

1. There is the excellency of meekness. Meekness is the bridle of anger or wrath; the meek man is *slow to* [Heb. *of*] *wrath*. He is one that does not soon take offence, and keeps such a command over his passion, that it does not unreasonably and violently break out, breaking up as it were the doors of his soul, and flying forth and raging. The excellency of this is, that such a one is an understanding man, *of great understanding*.

* This subject was handled at Ettrick in October 1724.

*standing.* Worldly men, whose pride and passion is to them instead of law and reason, count such a one a poor, mean-spirited, silly man, that does not understand himself; for that when he receives an injury, he does not presently take fire and resent it: but as the understanding, so the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; and the world's fool is God's wise man.

2. The mischief of passionateness, and the evil thereof. The passionate man, is *hasty of spirit;* his passion runs before his reason. The original calls him *short,* or *cutted of spirit.* He is so far from being slow to wrath, that his spirit finds a short way to it. His fiery spirit is as tinder to every spark of provocation, and at one step is forward in the midst of wrath or sinful anger. The ill of this is, that he *exalts,* or *lifts up his own folly,* like a standard, making it visible to all about him. He thinks by that means to proclaim his worth, and make others stand in awe of him; but in very deed he proclaims his folly, that is, his sinfulness, corruption, naughtiness, and wickedness.

So here anger is held forth as a passion dangerous and difficult to manage, which the wise will therefore be loth to venture into, and when they are in, will labour to keep a bridle upon; but fools rashly venture on, and let loose the bridle to it, and in it.

The text gives a foundation for the following doctrines.

Doct. I. The man that is slow of wrath or anger, shews great wisdom and understanding in his meek and peaceable disposition and deportment.

Doct II. The passionate man proclaims his folly and naughtiness in his unbridled passion and sinful anger.

I shall handle each doctrine in order.

Doct. I. The man that is slow of wrath or anger, shews great wisdom and understanding in his meek and peaceable disposition and deportment.

In

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider the nature of wrath or anger in general.

II. Shew what it is to be slow of wrath.

III. In what respects he that is slow of wrath is of great understanding.

IV. Make some improvement.

I. I am to consider the nature of wrath or anger in general. Anger or wrath is a passion which is not of itself sinful, but is either good or ill as it is regulated: and so it differs from fretting, murmuring, and envy, which can never be good or allowable in any case. This is evident from the scripture's attributing anger or wrath to God. We find it in Christ, Mark iii. 5. *He looked round about on them with anger.* So that without question there is an allowable and holy anger. Such was that of Moses, of whom it is said, that, on his descent from the mountain, when he saw the calf and the dancing, *his anger waxed hot*, Exod. xxxii. 26. And this is our duty, Eph. iv. 26. *Be ye angry, and sin not.* But such is the corruption of man's nature, that when this passion riseth in his breast, it is exceeding hard to keep it within bounds, and rarely is it that it overflows not the banks. Therefore the apostle exhorts, that *all wrath and anger be put away*, Eph. iv. 31.

Anger is like a fire, that is a good servant, but an ill master. It is a servant to the meek, but a master to the passionate. The passion of anger is like wind to the ship: so is it to the soul called to steer its course to Immanuel's land.

1. If there be a dead calm, and the winds blow not at all, or very weakly, the ship does not make way. And if men be so stupid, indolent, and unconcerned, that their spirits will not stir in them, whatever dishonour they see done to God, these are standing still in the way to heaven. And many such there be, who are all fire in their own matters, but

in those of God, their hearts are dead like a stone. And if their hearts on such occasions stir in them, but very weakly, they are making but little progress. Such was the case of Eli: *His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* 1 Sam iii. 13 It was not so with Paul: for *his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city* [Athens] *wholly given to idolatry,* Acts xvii. 16.

2. If the wind is brisk enough, but yet is contrary, the ship will at best have much ado with it, and may be driven into a shore which the crew desired not to see. So if men's anger be in itself sinful, if their anger burn against what is good and just, against their own mercy, their duty, such things or persons as are for their real good, as the Jews wrath was against Christ, his apostles, and their doctrine; such anger cannot fail of an unhappy event, driving the soul into much sin, and driving at length into destruction, if that wind do not turn, and they change their course. This was the case of the Jews, of whom the apostle says, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, "and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; "and they please not God, and are contrary to all "men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that "they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for "the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

3 Though the wind be not contrary, yet if it be too impetuous and violent, it may dash the ship on rocks, and split it. So though mens anger may have a just ground, yet if it prove excessive and boisterous, it may run men headlong into great mischiefs, to the dishonour of God, and ruin of themselves and others. And therefore Jacob thus censures that of Simeon and Levi, Gen. xlix. 7. "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Oft-times reason lets in anger into one's breast; but then anger turns out reason to the door, and carries on all precipitantly without reason or discretion: like one that

that brings in a coal to his hearth, because of the cold, but unwarily lets it fall on tow, which sets the house on fire about his ears.

The ingredients of anger are these following.

1. A commotion or trouble of the spirit, which ariseth from an apprehension of an injury The injury apprehended strikes on mens spirit, and disturbs its repose. And many times the sinfulness of it riseth here, that there is an injury apprehended where there is none, or it is apprehended to be greater than it really is In both cases it is rash anger; hence our Lord says, Matth v 22. "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgement: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." But however it is, as to the cause of it, it is according to its name an anger, vexation or trouble of spirit in its nature, which a wise man will be loth to admit without a good cause, 2 Pet. ii 7

2 Hatred, which is bent against the injury apprehended, that they cannot think on it but with detestation. And in respect of this anger is called indignation. And if the injury be real, and consequently a sinful thing, and the hatred and indignation be confined to it, the anger in that case is laudable, so that it keep due proportion with the offence, 2 Cor. vii. 11. But here again the sinfulness of anger riseth, while like a flood-water it does not only fill the channel, but overflows the banks; the hatred being not only directed against our neighbour's sin and offence, but his person, whom we are obliged to love as ourselves, notwithstanding of his real or apprehended injuries to us, Matth. v. 44.

3. Grief, for whosoever is angry is grieved too, Mark iii 5. And this ariseth from the conceived injury too which is hated. But the grief is on the account of the party or parties injured; and in lawful anger it is impartial, and goes as broad as the injury

gries: as in our Lord's anger, he was "grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts." He was grieved for it as an injury to his Father, to himſelf, and to their own ſouls. And here is another joint, at which our anger is often diſtorted, and becomes ſinful. The grieved angry man has, often looks only to himſelf as ſlighted, deſpiſed and wronged; upon that his anger feeds: but he has no regard to the diſhonour of God nor to the wrong done to the injurer's own ſoul, by the injury to us.

4. A deſire of the vindication of the right and honour of the injured. And from this appetite or deſire it hath one of its names in the New Teſtament, ORGE. And this deſire is allowable as far as it ſeeks what only in a way of juſtice and equity is neceſſary to vindicate the right and honour of the injured, and withal ſeeks it in an orderly and allowable way. The meek deſire that in their anger; but they commit it to God to whom it belongs. But here again our anger uſually becomes ſinful; partly, while that deſire reſpects only our own right and honour, and we have no concern for the vindication of the honour of God and our neighbour; partly, while men are bent on revenge, which is meaſured not by the rule of moderation, juſtice, and equity, but by the ſatisfying of an exorbitant paſſion; and partly, while men are by it led to carried to avenge themſelves, while yet they have no lawful power, Rom. xii. 19. whence come ſcoldings, quarrelings, beatings, and fightings.

Thus we may ſee that anger is a paſſion uneaſy to one's ſelf, compounded of bitter ingredients and uneaſy paſſions; in which one walks on ſlippery ground, where he is apt to fall headlong.

II. I come now to ſhew what it is to be ſlow of wrath. It imports theſe three things.

1. Being ſlow to take up anger in one's own cauſe. The wiſe man is not ſoon angry, Prov. xiv. 17. It

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is wisdom indeed to be very tender of God's honour, but to be more indifferent about our own personal interests, as Moses was. But the world's way is the reverse of this; they are lions in their own cause, but lambs in the matters of God. However, in all cases the wise are not rash with their anger; they consider matters duly, put a charitable construction on actions that will bear one, and put up many offences, covering them with a mantle of love.

2. Managing it warily when it is taken up, being guided by the light of reason, and not by the fire of passion. This is to possess themselves, and not to be turned out of the possession of themselves by their passion, Luke xxi. 19. They find themselves on slippery ground, and therefore are slow in their motions: they see their danger, and therefore do the rather watch, lest they be precipitated into what will afterward bring them nothing but remorse.

3 Being easy to lay it down, Eph iv. 26, 27.; easy to forgive and forget injuries. Matth. xviii 22. The more slow that anger burns, it is the easier to quench, it doth the easier die out. Thus he who has the rule over his own spirit, as he manageth his anger regularly while there is need for it, he shuts it out when there is no more use for it.

III. I proceed to shew in what respects he that is slow of wrath is of great understanding Such a one thereby shews, that he does well understand,

1. His duty to God his sovereign Lord Eccl. v. 2. If men understood that, they would not be so ready to take fire on every temptation. If they considered that God is the Judge of all and their Judge, to whom belongs vengeance; that he has by his command injoined them patience, long-suffering and forbearance; and that he is slow to wrath towards themselves, and that they are obliged to be followers of God; they would see it their duty to be slow to anger.

2. Him-

2 Himself. The passionate man thinks he will shew those that offend him, that he understands himself very well. But our text shews, that he hangs out a sign at his own door to tell that a fool dwells within, one who does not understand himself. If you saw one girt about with bags of powder run in among sparks, you would say he did not understand himself. He that is truly wise understands himself to have a mass of corruption within him, to be of like passions with others, that it is very hard for him to be angry and not sin, to bridle his passion sufficiently if once it get place; and therefore he is slow to wrath, as one handles glasses tenderly and warily, that knows the nature of them.

3. Satan's diligence and malice against him, who will not lose a fair opportunity for tripping up his heels. He knows full well, that that evil spirit will blow the coal that he has cast in, if so he may bring it to a flame, and then say, *Aha, I am warm* Eph iv. 26, 27 He understands that Satan seeks first to trouble the waters, and then to fish in the muddy flood. The passionate fool sees nothing of this, till once he finds himself carried headlong, and afterwards comes to himself.

4. His real interest; that to give up himself to his passion is to bring damage to himself, to let in an enemy that makes havock of soul and body at once To see inhabitants breaking down their city, and dismantling it of its walls, whereby they should be defended from their enemies, we would say, they understood not their own interest As little does the man that is hasty to wrath hasty in it, and slow at laying it down. He has no rule over his own spirit, Prov xxv. *ult.* His passion masters his reason, and his grace too if he have any: and so the good that is in may go out, and ill may come in.

5. Human nature, and what metal fallen Adam's sons and daughters are of. He is not surprised to meet with offences among mankind, more than with midges

midges flying about him in the ſummer, or froſt and ſnow pinching him in the winter. For as that is the nature of the ſeaſons, ſo the other is the nature of ſinful mankind. He conſiders that there is not one among them all to caſt a ſtone at another; that as ſome offend him, he offends others too; and therefore ſince he needs forbearance and forgiveneſs, he will give it too.

I come now to improve this ſubject; and that in an uſe of exhortation.

Be ſlow of wrath, ſlow to take up anger, wary in managing your ſpirits when angry, and ready to lay it down. For motives, conſider,

1. It is a heaven-like diſpoſition, it is a God-like and Chriſt-like temper, Joel ii. 13 "God is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger. Matth. xi. 29 I am meek and lowly in heart," ſays Chriſt. And ſhould we follow the dictates and way of the wicked world, which puts darkneſs for light? If we bear the name of Chriſtians, let us labour to carry like Chriſt.

2. The comfort of ſociety depends on it, Col. iii 13. O! what diſorder does the want of this breed among neighbours, and in families! One fires his train, another catches the fire, as flax or tow would do, and then the flame goes up; and Satan finds his account in it.

3 It is neceſſary for a man's own comfort. The haſty man will never want wo, while he lives in a ſinful world. And what a pity is it that our peace and quiet ſhould lie at the mercy of every one who has the ill diſpoſition to give us a provocation? The meek man will maintain his quiet over the belly of theſe, and will be happy in bearing calmly the provocation that others are ſo unhappy as to give.

4. It is neceſſary to keep both one's ſelf and others from the ſnare of ſin. We are to pray, *Lead us not into temptation.* This is a neceſſary mean thereto, Prov xv. 18. "A wrathful man ſtirreth up ſtrife: but

but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife." Compare Matth. v. 9. *Blessed are the peace-makers.* He that is slow to anger keeps the bridle over his own passion, he lays in no fewel to another's, and so appeaseth strife, as the coal goes out when left alone on the hearth.

5. Consider the authority of God binding it on us, Jam. i 19 *Let every man be slow to wrath.* This is backed by the authority and example of the Mediator, who cast us a copy for our imitation. Matth. xi. 29 *I am meek and lowly in heart.* Let this double tie serve to bind down our spirits when they begin to swell sinfully.

6. What need we have of the Lord's being slow to anger towards us, Lam iii. 22, 23. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" There is no body so frequent, so unreasonable in their provocations to us as we towards him. What should come of us, if Heaven should fire against us at every provocation? We should be made to cry as those unreasonably did, Numb xvii. 12, 13. "Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die: Shall we be consumed with dying?" What we need for ourselves, let us use to others.

7. *Lastly,* The want of it will provoke the Lord to anger against us Remember the servant in the parable. Matth xviii 33, 34 "Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him" God is almighty, able to revenge every disobedience; yet is *slow to anger,* Nah. i 3. We are weak, and often can do no more than show ill-will. How then can it miss to provoke the Lord against us?

But here it is necessary to caution against sinful slackness to anger, whereby the necessary duties of justice

justice and charity come to be omitted. It has indeed a semblance to meekness and slowness to wrath: but it is really the rock on the right hand of them, as passion is the rock on the left; and upon the one as well as the other the ship of the soul may be damaged, if it is not dashed in pieces. The difference betwixt this slowness and sinful slackness is, that the former proceeds from true wisdom, as in the text, *viz.* spiritual and heavenly wisdom, wrought in men by the Spirit, through the word, Jam iii. 17. the latter from a mere natural softness of temper which we call good humour, or from carnal wisdom, in both which the principle manner, and end of the action are all confined within the circle of self, and so cannot be acceptable to God, as they are not the product of his sanctifying Spirit. And hence it is that the effect of them is often, as in this case, quite contrary to the rule of the word; which the effect of grace and spiritual wisdom can never be, Gal v. 22, 23.

Now, the evil of this slackness lies in its causing a criminal omission of that duty which we owe to God, and to our neighbour, either by the tie of justice or charity. Such was the sinful slackness of Gallio, Acts xviii. 17 of the church of Corinth in not casting out the incestuous person, 1 Cor. v with 2 Cor. vii. 11. and of Eli in not restraining his sons.

We have need to take heed how we steer our course then, keeping off sinful passion on the one hand, and sinful slackness on the other, studying a Christian meekness, a gracious slowness of wrath, whereof the new nature is the principle, the word, the rule and reason, the glory of God the chief end, and faith the mean by which we come to exercise it. All other meekness and slowness of wrath, will be found but spurious meekness and slowness, or sinful slackness.

Therefore let us look to Christ for the sanctifying of our nature, the extinguishing of the hellish fire of them by his Spirit working like water; let us entertain habitual impressions of the majesty of God, the spirit-

spirituality of the law, and our own danger, on our spirits; and labour to exercise this slowness to wrath, depending on Jesus as the head of influences for strength.

DOCT. II. *The passionate man proclaims his folly and naughtiness in his unbridled passion and sinful anger.*

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I Consider the nature of passion or sinful anger.

II. Shew how the passionate man proclaims his folly.

III Make application.

I. I shall consider the nature of passion or sinful anger. And that we may understand it, let us view,

1. The causes of it.
2. The kinds of it.
3. The effects of it.

*First,* Let us view the causes constituting anger, sinful anger. Anger then is sinful anger and passion,

1 When it riseth without a just ground, having no cause for it assigned by grace or right reason as just. Hence our Lord speaks of one's being *angry without a cause*, Matth. v. 22. That is either, (1.) without any cause at all. The rush grows not without mire, nor the flag without water. But the heart of man can produce anger without any cause given him There is a certain sourness of spirit that sometimes sits down on men, whereby they are angry while they know not wherefore. A humbling instance of the corruption of nature. (2.) Vainly, upon some light and trifling occasion, unworthy of such notice. There is no just cause for it; but the judgment is weak and yielding, and so gives way to passion. But, O! how often do terrible flames arise from such trifling sparks, and the waters which at the beginning would hardly wet one's foot, or might easily be slept over, come through this rash anger to overflow even to the neck? Prov. xvii 14.

"The

"The beginning of ſtrife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with."

2. When it keeps no due proportion with the offence, but in its degree quite exceeds the meaſure of the injury received, as in the caſe of Simeon and Levi reſpecting the Shechemites, Gen. xlix. 7 forecited, and that of David with regard to his deſign againſt Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 34. compare ver. 32, 33. It muſt needs be ſinful anger, that turns men ſo far out of themſelves, as to turn about their cart-wheel on the cumin, which might be beat out with a rod Men need to take good heed leſt they exceed; for when the ſmoke of paſſion riſes, men ſee injuries as in a magnifying glaſs; and being once ſet on the paſſionate run, are apt to purſue beyond bounds.

3. When it is not directed to the honour of God, and the deſtruction of ſin; but is confined within the curſed circle of ſelf, Prov. xxi. 24. "Proud and haughty ſcorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath." God is diſhonoured, as well as the man is wronged: but the paſſionate man has no concern for the former, but his concern is ſwallowed up in the latter. So it is a fire lighting on others, juſt to make them ſacrifices to the pride and arrogance of a lofty heart, which thinks nothing too much for itſelf, Prov xxviii. 25.

4. When it makes no due difference between the offender and the offence, but gives both one meaſure. It was the corrupt divinity of the Phariſees in Chriſt's time, Matth. v. 43. "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." But Chriſt, who never bade us love but hate offences, and acts of enmity, will have us nevertheleſs to love the perſons even of offenders and our enemies, ver. 44. thereby ſhewing that we muſt in our anger make a difference betwixt the offender and the offence. But, alas! how little is this regarded, but the paſſion hand over head treats the offender and the offence alike, till they like the one no better than the other.

5. When the effects of it are ſinful. If the fruits be ſinful, the tree they grow on muſt be ſo, for the tree is known by its fruit. The effects of holy anger are juſt and good: but when anger puts a man ſo far out of himſelf, that it unfits him for his duty, or drives him on to revenge, or breaks out in clamour and evil-ſpeaking, and the like; it is eaſy to ſee that that fire is not from the altar, but from another quarter. Moſes himſelf had a fit of it, Pſal. cvi. 33. "They provoked his ſpirit, ſo that he ſpake unadviſedly with his lips." But paſſion is never a whit the better of that, but the more to be feared, as a potent enemy which maſtered ſo much meekneſs for a time as Moſes was poſſeſſed of.

6. *Laſtly*, When it is kept up and continued beyond due time, contrary to the apoſtle's counſel, Eph. iv. 26. *Let not the ſun go down upon your wrath.* The keeping up of ſinful anger is a double ſin. It is ſinful to admit it, is is more ſo to keep it up, and refuſe to let it fall. It is not to be thought, that it is lawful to keep it up till the ſun go down; for what is ſinful in its riſe, muſt be more ſo in its continuance. But the meaning is in theſe two things. (1.) As the ſun with his ſcorching heat haſtens to go down, like one running a race, Pſal. xix. 5. ſo ſhould we to lay by our paſſion, which comes ordinarily far ſooner to a height with us. (2.) As the ſetting ſun bringing on the night, calls men to caſt off their cloaths, and ſo compoſe themſelves to reſt; ſo ſhould we timely put off this part of the old man, and get our ſpirits compoſed. And particularly we ought not to lie down with it; for whereas the day-light affords a variety of objects, that may ſerve to divert the force of paſſion, the darkneſs of the night hides all theſe, and leaves the fiery ſpirit to feed on that allenarly, which raiſed it. So it gets leave to range through the ſeveral methods of revenge, Pſal. xxxvi. 4.

*Secondly*, Let us view the kinds of ſinful anger. In general, anger is twofold.

1. There

1. There is an anger eſſentially ſinful, ſinful in itſelf. And that is where there is no juſt ground of anger. Such was Jonah's anger at the withering of the gourd, and Saul's anger againſt the prieſts whom he murdered. The worſt anger of this kind is, where that inflames anger that ſhould be entertained with love and eſteem. Such was Saul's anger againſt David: he was angry with him, juſt becauſe he behaved himſelf well, and God proſpered him. See Pſal. cix. 3, 4, 5. Men may ſin, in their anger at others for their ſin: but to be angry at one for their duty, there can be no good in that. This kind of anger is like a water that has quite left its channnel, or like fire in the thatch of a houſe, where it ſhould never be.

2. There is an anger accidentally ſinful: and that is, where there is indeed juſt ground for it, but it is ill managed, either by not keeping proportion with the offence, or not directing it to the honour of God, *&c.* Such was Moſes' anger againſt the Iſraelites, and David's againſt Nabal: and the more of this is in it, and the more violent, the worſe is the anger, and the more helliſh; as Simeon and Levi's anger againſt the Shechemites. This is like a water which is indeed in its channel, but withal it is without it too; or like a fire which is indeed on the hearth, but withal coals of it ſcattered up and down the houſe. More particularly, there is,

1. A cloſs ſullen anger, called, Eph iv. 31. *bitterneſs*, which is a fire that burns within the breaſt, with little noice. It is kept within, and makes one go with a bitter heart, and full of gall, a burden to himſelf and others, till it be digeſted It has more of diſcontent than revenge; and often carries not to actual revenge, either becauſe they cannot, or for certain reaſons will not. So it is very lingering, like a fire that has little vent. There is much of this in the world, which eats out the comfort of ſociety, and mens own comfort. This is it that makes many go champing their own bridle, and gnawing on their own liver; and

tinctures all their words and looks, as in the jaundice the overflowing gall colours the ſkin. And the nearer the relation is, it is the more dangerous; hence is that exhortation, Col. iii. 19. "Huſbands, love your wives, and be not bitter againſt them."

2. An open and impetuous anger, called their *wrath*, which is too violent to hold long. The hot ſpirit keeps it not in, as in the former caſe; but it breaks forth like a thunder-ſhower, overflowing. It is a moſt dangerous thing, apt to precipitate men into ſuch indecencies and wickedneſſes, that if they were themſelves, they would be ready to ſay, *Am I a dog that I ſhould do theſe things?* But the ſmoke of the paſſion ſtrikes them blind while it laſts; for it is in effect a ſhort madneſs. Men are apt to think little of this, unreaſonably taking it for bravery of ſpirit, Prov. xxv. *ult.* and becauſe it is ſoon over, and they rue it: but it leavens the whole man, it is fire ſet to the devil's train; and oft-times that is done in it, which it is too late to rue after.

3 There is a purſuing implacable wrath, called there, *anger;* which is ſet upon revenge ſo, that they will never lay down their anger till they be revenged to their own ſatisfaction. This is not kept ſo cloſe as the firſt kind, nor is it carried ſo precipitantly as the ſecond; but is more open than the firſt, more deliberate than the ſecond, and ſo is the more deviliſh. This is to be mad with reaſon, and may well be called malicious anger, and is at the utmoſt remove from the ſpirit of Chriſtianity. The apoſtle calls it a *giving place to the devil*, Eph. iv 27. In other kinds of anger the devil takes place; in this they give him place.

Again, more particularly, there may be obſerved a fourfold anger.

1. Anger that is long a-taking up, and is ſoon laid down This is the beſt ſort of that ill thing: it ſpeaks either a good natural temper, or great grace. It is like fire in wet wood, which is ill to kindle, and ſoon dies

dies out. However, it is matter of humiliation, being sinful anger; and needs sprinkling of the blood of Christ, as well as the worst.

2. Anger soon taken up and soon laid down. This is like fire in flint, flying out with a touch, but quickly vanish away. It is good it is soon laid down; as when one falls into a mire, the sooner out the better. But it is a great evil to be soon angry, Tit. i. 7. to sting like a wasp at a touch. It is very contrary to the nature of God, who is slow to anger; and makes people an easy prey to temptation, like a bunch of dry straw to a spark of fire, soon kindled and soon burnt out.

3. Anger long a-taking up, and long a-laying down. This is like fire in iron, which is long a-heating, and long a-cooling too. It is good it is long a-taking up; but very sinful that it is long a-laying down. Many value themselves, and are valued by others, upon their good temper, that they are so long a-taking up anger, and can overlook so many offences; who yet are of such a disposition, that if once they be heartily angered, there is no gaining of them again. They are like fire in a moss, that is very ill to take fire, but when once fired there is almost no quenching of it. And they, when once raised in anger, are implacable. This is most sinful and dangerous. Their name is in the black roll, Rom. i. 31. Satan has eminent place with such, Eph. iv. 26, 27. and they cannot walk in a course of communion with God, Matth. xviii. *ult.*

4. Anger soon taken up, and long a-laying down. This is like fire in oil or spirituous liquor, kindled with a touch, and burning vehemently, and continually while there is any thing to burn. This is the worst of all; it has all the mischief of the third kind, and that ill in it over and above, that it is soon taken up. It speaks a fearful height and power of sin, a person to be a perfect slave to his passion, who is guided neither

by grace nor reaſon: and it is of all the moſt oppoſite to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity.

*Thirdly,* Let us view the effects of ſinful anger. I will hint at the general heads of them as the particulars are too many.

1. It is miſchievous to the body, a killing inſtrument to it, Job v. 2. *Wrath killeth the foliſh man.* Therefore the ſcripture repreſents it as a ſin againſt the ſixth command, Matth. v. 21, 22. The tranſports of paſſion makes a man a tormentor to himſelf, inflame the heart, fire the eyes, render the viſage fierce and pale, and looſe as it were the very joints; and hiſtory affords ſeveral inſtances of perſons who have been thrown into fevers, and died, by their paſſion. And it readily makes a ſenſible alteration on the body.

2. It fires the tongue in a particular manner, James iii. 6 and that brings along with it a train of evils, Eph. iv. 31 quarreling, bitter words, railing and ſcolding, reviling and reproaching, ſwearing, curſing, fearful imprecations, blaſpheming, *&c.* And all theſe, being traced to their original, are landed at the door of paſſion, which opening, ſends out theſe as the ſmoke of the pit

3. It diſturbs ſociety, and is deſtructive of it, Prov. xv. 18. "A wrathful man ſtirreth up ſtrife. And where ſtrife is, there is confuſion, and every evil work." James iii 16. It is the coal that fires families and neighbourhoods, and ſets every one againſt another. Yea, hence proceed people's devouring one another, ſtriking, fighting, wounding, and murdering: ſo that this paſſion has been the death of many, and brought many to an evil end.

4. It overclouds reaſon, as in the text. It carries a man out of himſelf, that he cannot judge of matters clearly, nor act deliberately; but it makes him raſh and precipitate in his managements, ſo that when the fit is over, nothing remains to him by it but remorſe.

5. *Laſtly,*

5. *Laſtly*, It unfits a man for his duty.——For the duty of his ſtation; for often the paſſion makes him, that when he is doing, he knows not what he is doing.——For his duty to God, and mars any thing of that kind in his hand, James i. 20. "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God." To conclude in a word, the effects of ſinful anger are lively repreſented by Moſes in his holy anger breaking the tables of the law, Exod. xxxii. 19. When ſinful paſſion is up, what will it not do? it will precipitate men into all miſchief.

II. The next head is to ſhew how the paſſionate man proclaims his folly. He plainly diſcovers that he does not truly underſtand his duty to God, himſelf, Satan's malice, his own intereſt, or human nature; of which I have ſpoke before. Further, he proclaims himſelf,

1. A proud man, Prov. xxi. 24. The paſſionate man is always a proud man, and the proud man, is a fool in God's account, and in the account of all who underſtand themſelves. Were there leſs pride, there would be leſs paſſion: but he who is conceited of his own excellency, cannot miſs to fall into the ſnare, while he receives not from others what he thinks is due to his merit.

2 A weak man, one incapable to rule himſelf, Prov. xxv *ult.* Is he not a weak man, who rules not himſelf by grace or reaſon, but is a ſlave to his paſſion, and muſt roll or flee away before it, as chaff before the wind. You know, that children, by reaſon of their weakneſs of ſpirit are eaſily fretted and angered: and of the ſame make are the paſſionate, who on every trifling occaſion loſe the maſtery of themſelves.

3 An unmortified man, whoſe deſires of the world's ſmiles are too vigorous, his uneaſineſs at its frowns too great, his expectations from the world by far too big. For theſe are the ſources of unruly paſ-

ſion,

sion, always arising from one's being baulked or disappointed in some thing or other, Col. iii. 3, 8. And an unmortified, spirit is a foolish spirit, James iii. 17, 18.

4. A rash and precipitant man, dangerous to society, apt to run himself and others into snares Prov. xxii. 24, 25. And this must oblige both himself and others to call him a foolish man. It is the character of a prudent man to be deliberate in his motions, and foreseeing: but the passionate man is the very reverse of this, Prov xxii 3. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished."

5. *Lastly*, An unwatchful man, who has his enemies within him, without him, round about him, and yet cannot be brought to stand on his guard, and repress their motions, Prov. iv. 23, 24. This his practice is folly with a witness.

I shall now make some practical improvement of this subject.

Use. I. of humiliation and conviction.

1. It must be a dangerous and sinful thing designedly to provoke and stir up others to passion Yet how many are there who make no bones of it, but will divert themselves with it? Thus the young and foolish especially, will please themselves in angering the aged and hasty. But let such know, that 'fools make a mock at sin,' Prov. xiv. 9. It is dangerous to please one's self with what is displeasing to God, and ensnaring to the soul of our neighbour.

2. What shame and confusion of face may cover every one of us, when we examine ourselves in this point? The picture of passion is drawn, and is it not an ugly one? But where is the man or woman that has not entertained this monster, and in whose breast it has not been bred many a time? O how unlike God and Christ has it made us, how unlike Christians, yea how unlike rational men and women?

Think not light of it, Eph. v. 6. compared with chap. iv. 31 We muſt be waſhed from the guilt of it by Chriſt's blood, and the fire of it muſt be quenched by his Spirit, or we will be undone for ever.

USE II. of exhortation; which I offer in theſe two particulars.

*Firſt*, Beware of provoking and ſtirring up others to paſſion. Lay in no fewel to that fire in the breaſts of others, neither deſignedly nor any other manner of way, without exception of any thing but neceſſary duty. If that will provoke people's paſſion there is no help for it. Better men be provoked than God, Acts iv. 19. But otherwiſe beware of it, as ye will anſwer it to the God that made you. To preſs this, conſider,

1. The law of love binds it on you, *Love thy neighbour as thyſelf* If you do ſo, you will be loth to provoke him; for you would not chuſe to be provoked yourſelf. If you love his ſoul as you are obliged to do, you will be as loth to ſtir up his paſſion, as to fire his houſe. If you love his peace and welfare, you will be loth to rob him of it.

2. That is to be a ſnare to him, to lead him into ſin God charged his people, Lev xix. 14 "Thou ſhalt not put a ſtumbling-block before the blind;" and the apoſtle will have all to take heed, "that no man put a ſtumbling-block, or an occaſion to fall in his brother's way," Rom. xiv. 13. To lead your neighbour into a mire, over a precipice where he might fall, and break a leg or an arm, you will own would be akin to murder. This is worſe, as being of the nature of ſoul-murder.

3. You are partaker of the guilt which is brought on another by your means: and it will juſtly be charged on you, as inſtrumental in it, laying the ſnare for them, 1 Kings xxi. 25. As he who lays the ſtumbling-block before a blind man, over which he breaks his neck, is guilty of his blood; ſo are thoſe who provoke others to paſſion, guilty of their ſin.

4. *Laſtly*, It is doing Satan's work, and that is a ſorry

ſorry office. When Peter adviſed our Saviour to beware of expoſing himſelf to ſuffering, he ſays, *Get thee behind me, Satan,* Matth. xvi. 23 for he ſaw that Peter was ſerving him in that. Satan ſpared Job's wife, becauſe he had uſe for her to provoke him to blaſpheme. And that is the way they are employed, who provoke others

Therefore I beſeech you, beware of this practice

1. For God's ſake, who is thereby diſhonoured. The coal you caſt into your neighbour's breaſt, kindles a flame there: but the ſmoke mounts upward, and darkens the heavens. And therefore, as ye have any love to God, or regard to his honour, treat your neighbour tenderly in that point.

2. For your neighbour's ſoul's ſake, which is thereby endangered and involved in gilt, Rom xiv. 15. Say not, *Am I my brother's keeper?* You certainly are ſo far: but certainly you can never think you are at liberty to be your brother's deſtroyer.

3. For your own ſake, whoſe accounts are thereby increaſed with the addition of your neighbour's guilt. "Therefore be not ye partakers with them: and have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them," Eph v 7, 11. Each of us will have enough ado with our burden; why ſhould we adopt the ſins of others, and ſtir them up to what will be laid to our charge?

4 *Laſtly.* As ye would not do Satan a ſervice and a pleaſure. Duſt is the ſerpent's meat; even the ſin and ruin of mankind, with the diſhonour of God, affords him all the ſatisfaction he has. It pleaſes him to ſee them ſnares to one another, and to cleave them with a wedge of their own timber.

I ſhall give you a few directions.

1. Be habitually concerned that ye ſtand not in the way of, but to advance, the ſpiritual good of others, Gal vi. 10. He who is concerned for one's recovery, will be careful not to do any thing that may occaſion a relapſe to him. It is Cain's humour, unconcerned-

neſs

neſs for the good, eſpecially the ſpiritual good of others, that makes men ſo eaſy in this point. But take that advice, Rom. xiv. 19, 20. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat deſtroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence."

2. Be conſcientious in giving every one their due, Rom. xiii. 7, 8. "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law." There is an honour due to men as men, which makes them to be no objects of contempt, 1 Pet. ii. 17. Be always ready to give every one what is due to them, whether in the way of juſtice or charity. For wrong done, and contempt ſhewn, are the great upſtirrers of this paſſion, and kindlers of this coal, in the breaſts of others.

3. Particularly make conſcience of your relative duties. The nearer the relation is, the provocation pierces the more deep, the peace is the more precious, and the offence in many caſes the harder to be removed, Prov. xviii. 19. Let huſbands and wives be tender of one another in that caſe, and beware of provoking one another's paſſion, as they would not be ſnares to one another, Eph. v. *ult.*. Let children honour and reverence their parents, as their natural lords; and parents treat their children as parts of themſelves, Eph. vi. 1, 2, 4. Let ſervants be preciſely juſt, faithful, and reſpectful to their maſters, and maſters juſt and equitable to their ſervants, verſe v. 9. It is the neglect of theſe things that provokes the paſſion of relatives.

4. Be not negligent and careleſs of your carriage and behaviour towards any body: for whatever difference there may be betwixt them and you you owe them an honour, 1 Pet. ii. 17.; you are capable of offending them, Matth. xviii. 7.; and it is dangerous

to

to be a ſnare to their ſouls, and all ſouls are alike precious. There was no more paid by Chriſt for the king's ſoul, than the beggar's. Rom. xiv. 15.

5. If one's paſſion be up or like to riſe, ſilence is oftimes neceſſary, *not anſwering again*, Tit. ii. 9. The reaſon is, *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out*, Prov. xxvi. 20. Wrath is a fire, anſwering often is like coals or fuel laid to it. Therefore learn to *give place to wrath*, Rom. xii. 19.

6. But ſometimes there is a neceſſity of anſwering, as when one is directly queſtioned, and an anſwer is looked for, and paſſion may be irritated by ſilence, the angry perſon judging himſelf deſpiſed by ſilence. John xix. 10. in that caſe a ſoft anſwer is a ſovereign remedy, Prov. xv. 1. as yielding wool will be a better fence againſt a cannon-ball than a ſtone wall. A ſoft tongue breaks the bone, and yet wounds no body, Prov. xxv. 15. So did Abigail pacify David.

7. *Laſtly*, Be ſtill ready to do them all good offices, Rom. xii. 19, 20, 21. And look to the Lord for the bleſſing on theſe things, practiſing them out of reſpect to his command: and great will be your peace and ſatisfaction therein.

Let no body ſay, Such a way of carrying is mean and ſneaking. It is preſcribed by God in his word, and it is recommended to us by the example of Chriſt, 1 Pet. ii. 23 "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not:" and it is true greatneſs of ſpirit, Prov. xvi. 32. "He that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a city."

*Secondly*, Beware of ſinful anger in yourſelves; bridle your own paſſion, and ſubdue it. Be not haſty in ſpirit; take not that fire into your boſom, nor cheriſh it, but extinguiſh it. To preſs this, I offer the following motives

1. Conſider it is a work of the fleſh as really as adultery and idolatry, Gal. v. 19, 20. It is a notable piece of the corruption of our nature, not to be tolerated,

rated, far leſs cheriſhed, but mortified. So the ſowing to it will bring a reaping of corruption. It is far from bravery of ſpirit, but is a piece of man's corrupt ſpirit, the ſpirit of the world.

2. It is not only a ſin, but it is a mother-ſin, Prov. xxix. 22. "An angry man ſtirreth up ſtrife, and a furious man aboundeth in tranſgreſſion." It is ſeldom it comes alone, but has a helliſh train along with it, as clamour, evil-ſpeaking, *&c.* And as one fire ſerves to kindle another, ſo ſeldom anger riſes in one's breaſt, but the ſparks fly into another's, and ſo another flame is kindled there.

3. It is a murdering ſin, as we may learn from our Saviour's teaching it to be forbidden in the words, "Thou ſhalt not kill, Matth. v. 21, 22. Ye have heard, that it was ſaid by them of old time, thou ſhalt not kill: and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the judgment. But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment." *&c.* It is of a murdering nature to the man himſelf, Job v. 2. and to the man the ſinful anger is conceived againſt. It is in its own nature heart-murder, Matth v 22. As he who luſteth after a woman is guilty of heart-adultery, ſo a ſinfully-angry man is guilty of heart-murder. It is ordinarily attended with eye-murder, venting itſelf in a wrathful countenance A proud look and bloody hands are joined Prov. vi 17. The Spirit of God takes notice of Cain's countenance, Gen iv. 5. See Obad 12. And it is attended with tongue-murder. Solomon obſerves, that *death and life are in the power of the tongue*, Prov. xviii. 21. If paſſion have the management of it, no wonder that it be found guilty of murder. In its ſhapes it reſembles both fire and ſword, and with the mouth bow and arrow, all of them inſtruments of death: and in the angry man it is ſo. James iii. 6 Pſal lvii .4 and lxiv. 3. And it has a native tendency to hand-murder, as in the caſe of Cain, Gen iv. 5 8

4 It diveſts a man of his ornament as a man,

whereby he differs from beasts, that is, his reason, Prov. xvii 12. *Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.* While passion rules, reason is banished: that is, he acts the beast, and lays aside the man so long. The beasts have their passion, anger, and wrath, as well as men; but they have no reason to guide it with, and therefore in them it is not sinful. But for men to indulge their passion, and be ruled by it, is to degrade themselves into the order of beasts.

5. It divests a man of his ornament as a Christian, i. e. *a meek and quiet spirit*, 1 Pet iii. 4. They who put on the new man, are supposed to lay aside and put off all these, *anger, wrath, malice*, &c. Col iii 8. Where the gospel comes in power, and casts the soul into the mould of it, it meekens the rugged spirit, Isa. xi 6. conforms the soul to Jesus the pattern of meekness and lowliness. So that professors would know, that victory over their passion is necessary to evidence their interest in Christ.

6. It is a downright opposite to communion with God, in any of the duties of religion. What duty is the man fit for when he is in a fit of passion? If God be speaking to him by his word, he does not hear, his heart is taken up with the object of his anger; and therefore the apostle saith, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." If he is to speak to God in prayer in that case, what comes of it? his praying is a burden to himself, and it is a burden to the Spirit of God too. "Therefore, (says Christ,) if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembereſt that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift," Matth v. 23, 24. And says the apostle, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting,

ing" 1 Tim. ii. 8. For as troubled water is not fit to receive the image of the sun, so the soul in passion is not meet for divine communications. Ah! how many secret prayers and family-prayers have been lost this way? Mal. ii. 13

7. *Lastly*, It excludes men out of the kingdom of heaven, Gal. v. 19 20, 21. And no wonder, for it is *a work of the flesh*, a mother sin, a murdering sin: and *no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him:* When men are brought into the kingdom of grace, their spirits are meekened: and thereare none taken into the kingdom of glory above, but who are taken into the kingdom of grace here.

I shall conclude with giving you a few directions.

1. Carry your sinful nature to Christ by faith to be healed, that ye may partake of the virtue of his blood and Spirit for your renovation, Gal v. 24. Without this all other remedies will be but scurfing over the sore.

2. When ye are in hazard of the temptation, catch hold of the promise of protection and preservation by faith, and use the means of resisting, Eph. vi. 16. "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" Hence one bears sometimes greater affronts and injuries better than lesser ones; because in the former case they betake themselves to the shields of gold made by the true Solomon, faith and dependence on the Lord; in the latter, like fools they venture with the brazen ones of their resolutions, &c.

3. Consider the sufferings of Christ, when any thing thou sufferest is like to raise thy passion, Heb. xii. 3. Those stung by the serpents in the wilderness, were to look to the brazen serpent and be healed. The injuries thou receivest are stings in this wilderness; therefore look to Christ who is exalted on the pole of the gospel, and thou shalt be healed by him.

4 Study humility, and remember well what ill-deserving creatures ye have been; how sinful ye are, and whatever is done or said to you, you deserve it,

and much more at his hand. This would make us lay our hand on our mouth, under the provocations we meet with, Tit. iii. 3. And whoever be the instruments of our uneasiness, we know it is in God's hand to make use of whom he will for our trial, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. It is pride that is at the bottom of all our passion, Prov. xxviii. 25.

5. Consider the injury done you, as a sin and as a trial.—As a sin of the party who does it; and this will turn your eye on the dishonour done to God thereby, and so make the injury to yourself light; it will also turn your anger into pity upon the party who is so unhappy as to provoke God against himself, by wronging of you. Thus Christ said on the cross, Luke xxiii. 34. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And consider the injury as a trial to you, a trial of your patience: God is looking on, observing how you will bear it; and God chuses the instrument of the trial.

6. Bear down your passion with silence, if you find it beginning to rise. I do not bid you harbour it in your heart, but refuse to give it vent. Some will think, that perhaps it is better to give it a vent presently, and that it will be the sooner over. But what is that but to satisfy it with clamour, and then it will end? That is not the scripture-method, as you may see, Prov. xii. 16. "A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame. Eph. iv. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice." Give fire a vent, and it will burn while it has matter; but if it have no vent at all, it will die out. So it will be in this case.

7. Study a charitable disposition, and beware of a suspicious, curious, and credulous temper. This would be an excellent antidote against the attempts of passion, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. Charity will put the best construction on the actions of others that rationally they can bear, and so eases men of many supposed injuries

injuries, and many real ones too. Suſpicion ſerves to gather in fewel from all quarters to the fire of paſſion, and would find it in plenty there, where charity would ſee none at all. Curioſity and credulity are paſſion's hand-maids. He that is curious to know what others think and ſay of him, and credulous to believe every report, will not want enough to make him uneaſy.

8. Remove the occaſions of your paſſion, as people uſe to keep lint far from the fire, becauſe the fire eaſily ſeizes on it. It is ſaid of Auguſtus, that he did for this reaſon break ſome curious glaſſes of purpoſe. And it is ſaid of turpentine, that it will draw fire to it. No fire fire is ſo eaſily drawn as that of paſſion. And therefore it is good to remove thoſe things that draw it to them.

9. *Laſtly, Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation;* and if at any time ye are catched, haſte out of the ſnare. Dallying with temptation is the fair way to entangle you further: therefore fly from it as from a ſerpent, leſt ye be ſtung to death thereby.

THE

# Distinguishing Characters

OF

# TRUE BELIEVERS.

## V. In relation to their forgiving of Injuries, in opposition to Revenge *.

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ROMANS xii. 19.

*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

AS in sinful anger there is a desire of revenge, so revenge is the hellish sacrifice to sinful anger, wherewith it is satisfied, and wherein it is fully accomplished. Therefore it is necessary to add a little concerning this. In the words there is,

1. A dehortation from revenge, which is proposed pathetically,

1*st*, With an endearing compellation, *Dearly beloved*. He knew how prone corrupt nature is to revenge, how hard it is to sinful men to be denied the satisfaction of it, when once their passion is up: therefore he interposes as it were with the angry man, and with softest words begs him to forbear.

2*dly*, Both negatively and positively, telling what is not to be done, and what is to be done.

(1.) Ye are not to avenge yourselves. All revenge is

* This subject was discussed in two short discourses, preached at Eyrick, Nov. 1. and 8. 1724.

is not sinful, nor here forbidden. For it is competent to God, as saith the text; and to the magistrate, chap. xiii 4. "He is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil." But it is private and personal revenge, namely, where one as a private man revenges himself on another, over whom he has no authority and power given him for that effect. *Avenge not yourselves.*

(2.) Ye are to *give place to wrath;* i. e. to the wrath of your adversary who does you the injury. Decline it as David did Saul's javelin thrown at him rather than give him as good as he brings. Rather pack up injuries, than revenge yourselves at your own hand. It is just what our Saviour teaches, Matth. v. 39. "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." As if he had said, Take a second blow, rather than revenge the first.

2. A reason of the dehortation, which is taken from Deut. xxxii. 35 *To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense.*

*1st*, Revenge belongs to God; he pleads it as his own right, and he has put in his claim to it. as his sole privilege before the world, in the word, that none who hear the Bible can pretend ignorance. Therefore it belongs not to us, and we must not invade his right.

*2dly*, He will certainly see to the execution of it. Say not, If we are not allowed to revenge injuries, then they will go unpunished, and many wrongs we get will never be righted. No; God will right all wrongs; none of them shall go unseen to. He has given his word for it.

The doctrine arising from the text is,

DOCT. *One's revenging himself at his own hand on such as have wronged him, is deeply sinful and dishonouring to God, whose province alone vengeance is.*

In treating this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What this revenge is that is so deeply sinful and dishonouring to God.

II. What is the sinfulness and dishonour to God in it.

III. Make application.

I. I am to shew what this revenge is that is so deeply sinful and dishonouring to God, whose province alone vengeance is.

Revenge is twofold, public and authoritative, private and personal.

1. There is a public and authoritative, revenge, which is taken on those that wrong others by such as are invested with a lawful power and authority for that purpose. This is so far from being sinful, that it is a necessary piece of justice and charity, and is done in the name and by the authority of God. Thus the magistrate has a power to revenge wrongs in the state, Rom. xiii 4 forecited. So also have church-rulers power to revenge or censure scandals in the church, 2 Cor x. 6. where the apostle speaks of *a readiness to revenge all disobedience* And thus masters of families have a power to revenge wrongs in their families, as Abram did in the case of Hagar, Gen. xvi 6 And it is of equal latitude with rightful government, in whatever lawful society. And persons wronged seeking redress from those to whom the public revenge belongs, is a lawful thing, and men are invested with authority that they may be so applied to, as the importunate widow did to the unjust judge, saying, *Avenge me of mine adversary*, Luke xviii 3. And applying to them for it, they apply to God for it, since they act in his name.

2. There is a private and personal revenge, which is the requiting of a wrong with the like or worse, for the satisfying of the passion of the injured, not supported by any authority from the God of vengeance.

This

This is the sinful revenge. The kinds of it are three

1*st*, Revenge taken by those in authority, out of hatred and ill-will to the person of him who does the wrong. For they are *revengers to execute wrath*, Rom. xiii. 4 not their own wrath against the person, but God's, in whose name they act. And the executing of justice must still be an act of love to their neighbour, which is the sum of the second table, but never of hatred. No man has any authority from God to that purpose. So the public revenge in that case becomes so far private, deeply sinful and dishonouring to God.

2*dly*, Revenge sought from those in authority, in cases wherein it is neither necessary for the public good, nor the amendment of the offender, nor the safety of the party lesed. This also is private revenge, deeply sinful, and dishonourable to God. For in such cases there is nothing obliging the man's conscience to seek it, and therefore he is obliged to forgive it wholly, Col. iii. 13. All then that is aimed at in such cases, is the satisfying of the man's own revengeful passion, getting his heart's sight on the party that has wronged him: which is diametrically opposite to the royal law of love, and the spirit of Christianity, James ii. 8 Let such take heed to this, who fly to their law-pleaing on every trifling occasion, just to gratify their own passion. It is a horrid abuse of an ordinance of God; it is to make the law, the magistrate, and the authority of God which he is invested with, subservient to your revengeful passions, Matth. v. 40.

3*dly*, Revenge taken by those not in authority empowering them to take it, taken by persons not acting in a public capacity, but at the command of their passion fleeing to take revenge at their own hand; which is most directly forbidden in the text. It is a common sin in the perverse generation wherein we live. And this revenge is taken three ways.

1*st*, By

1*st*, By words. I speak not here of revenge in the heart, for that belongs to anger, of which I have spoke already. But the tongue is as real an instrument of revenge, as the hands, swords, or spears. Therefore "say not, I will recompence evil. Prov. xx 22 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work," chap xxiv 29. And what are the scoldings and flourings among people, but the acting of revenge on them for the wrong alledged to be said or done to them? One's passion is fired against another, and then they pursue them with bitter words, lying, railing, and reviling speeches; so that many can no more speak good of those by whom they conceive themselves wronged, but on all occasions boil out their revenge that way. And the passion of revenge is served by these speeches, as really as it would be by the blood of their offenders, though not to the same degree.

2*dly*, By deeds, Prov xxvi 29. above quoted. When men make one ill turn meet another, so that they come to be even with those that have wronged them, paying them home in their own coin or worse, which the Spirit of God directly forbids, Rom xii. 17. *Recompense to no man evil for evil.* Thus many lay up their resentements till a convenient season, that it falls in their way, to do their neighbour an ill turn, because he did one to them; which will have a fearful end, Isa xxix 20. Of this kind is beating, fighting, and murdering; to which the revengeful passion natively leads

3*dly*, By omission of duty owning to the offending party, either in the way of justice, or charity, contrary to that, Rom. xii. 20 "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Many think that it is enough if they do no ill to those who offend them. But as the revengeful passion natively leads to with-holding the good that is due, contrary to Prov. iii. 27 it is evident, that the with-holding of it is a sacrifice

crifice to revenge, as well as the poſitive doing of ill to them. Even as beſiegers may revenge themſelves as effectually on the beſieged, by ſtarving them, as by ſtorming their town.

II. I proceed to ſhew what is the ſinfulneſs and diſhonour to God in this revenge.

1. It is directly oppoſite to the love of our neighbour, the fundamental law of the ſecond table, Lev. xix. 18. "Thou ſhalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge againſt the children of thy people, but thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf: I am the Lord." This law had in Chriſt's days a great deal of rubbiſh laid over it; but he cleared it from all that kind, both by this doctrine and example. But alas! how has the practice of Chriſtians ſo called, laid it under much rubbiſh again! Will men pretend to love thoſe as themſelves, whom they muſt at their own hand, without law or right, be revenged on? Nay, revenge is hatred carried to a height.

2. It is unjuſt violence, an aſſuming and exerciſing a power and authority over men which God never gave us. Whatever difference there is betwixt private men, ſome more ſome leſs honourable, they are by right all equal ſo far, being together ſubject to thoſe in authority to whom God has given the execution of wrath. And as unjuſt violence ever was ſo it will ever be highly diſhonourable to God the Judge and Protector of all, Gen. vi. 11. Men are not left like beaſts, among whom the ſtronger command the weaker: but God has ſet laws for the one and the other.

3. It cannot reach the true ends of revenge, which God hath ſettled It may indeed reach the end propoſed by the proud heart, *viz.* the ſatisfying of paſſion: but that end, and the means to it, are alike abhorred by God But God has appointed public revenge for the amendment of the party offending, Rom xiii 14. the public good of the ſociety, Deut. xix. 20. and for the

the safety of the wronged thereafter, 1 Tim ii. 2. But what doth private revenge but irritate the party smarting by it, give a scandalous example to others, and involve the party revenging and others to in much trouble?

4. It is void of all equity: for in it a man is accuser, judge, and executioner, all in his own cause. Who would reckon that fair in another's case? He not only accuses his neighbour of wrong, which is often so ill grounded, that if another were to judge, it would not be sustained: but he judges of it too, and passes sentence on his neighbour, to be sure in favour of himself: and finally he executes his own sentence: and all this when he is under the power of passion. Men are partial in their own favours at all times, and passionate then. Where then can equity have place, in a matter so stated?

5. It is an invading of the authority of those who are in authority, a taking out of their hand what God has put in it. Therefore the apostle immediately to this subject subjoins the duty of subjects to magistrates, and theirs to their subjects, Rom xiii. Members of families revenging themselves on one another, invade the master's authority; church-members in the case of scandals, the authority of the church-rulers; and the members of the politic body, in the case of civil injuries, the office of the magistrate. And usurpation in all cases is a sin of a deep dye.

6 *Lastly*, It is an invading of the authority of God. God himself claims vengeance as his peculiar prerogative; it is a flower of the crown of heaven, which he will not part with, as in the text. It is owned to be so by his good subjects, Psal xciv. 1. "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth: O God, to whom vengeance belongeth.——Nah. i 2 God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth." Therefore none are to meddle with it, but those who have authority from himself to act in his name therein. He only is fit to have it in his hand, not we: for he is omni-

omniſcient, we know little, and are liable to miſtakes: he is without paſſions, we are ready to be blinded by them: he is the common Father and Judge of all, moſt juſt and impartial, we are prejudiced in our own favours. A father of a family will not allow the children to puniſh one another, but bids them complain to him. So ſaith God to men, but private revenge regards not his orders.

I ſhall now make ſome practical improvement of this ſubject.

USE I. of lamentation. We may hence take occaſion to lament,

1. The ſtate of human nature in general. How low are we brought who once ſtood in the image of God! We may ſee here man's nature ſullied with two black lineaments of the picture of the devil. (1.) Wrong and injuſtice. Man was a righteous creature, but now he wrongs and is wronged, his fair righteouſneſs that he was created in, is gone. Men are now thieves, robbers, and oppreſſors to one another: and every-where the cry is heard of violence and wrong, and the neareſt relation is not a fence againſt it, Micah vii. (2.) Revenge of wrong for ſatisfying of paſſion. Hence there is a cry of cruel ſuffering at the hands of men who were created harmleſs, and are born naked, as deſigned for the picture of peace. His meekneſs and patience is gone too.

2. The ſtate of our nature of each of us in particular, that is ſo ready to revenge; ſo that no ſooner an injury is received by us, but as powder is ready to fly up when a ſpark lights on it, our nature is no leſs ready to fly to revenge on the firſt appearance of an injury. It is humbling to think how early this piece of our nature appears, even in the babe in the mother's arms, who ſeeks and ſhews a ſatisfaction in the revenge of what is diſpleaſing to it; though its giving the mother a ſtroke to give ſuch a one, *&c.* be ludi-

crous in itſelf, it is humbling to conſider the riſe of it.

3. The ſinfulneſs of our lives. O what guilt lies on every ſoul of us in this point! What black accounts on the ſcore of revenge! Though ſome perhaps have been kept from fighting, hurting, and wounding others; yet view the thoughts, words, leſſer deeds, and omiſſions of duty, in the way of revenge, who can count his errors that way? O the need of the blood and Spirit of Chriſt for healing of our nature, for removing the guilt and ſtain of our lives that way!

Use II. of reproof. It ſerves to reprove,

1. Thoſe who give themſelves the looſe in ſcolding, railing on, and reviling thoſe who they conceive have wronged them. Such tongue-vengeance did Shimei take on David for which juſt vengeance fell afterwards upon him from the Lord, 2 Sam. xvi 7, 8 It is an ill uſe of the tongue, to make it as a ſword to pierce our neighbour, and as claws to tear him. This is that *clamour and evil-ſpeaking*, which is the effect of paſſion, Eph. iv 31. See the danger of it, Matth. v. 22.

2 Thoſe who end their quarrels in blows and fightings. It is much to be lamented that this is ſo frequent amongſt us. It is contrary to the letter of the text, and being ſo contrary to the laws of God, it is ſtrange that thoſe who own a God, and the Bible to be his word, that they make no bones of it. It is contrary to the laws of the land alſo So that fighters do thereby ſhew, that they neither fear God nor regard man. In time of war, we were all men of peace, not a man among us to lend a hand to the defence of the public cauſe, for our King and country, religion and liberty, though called thereto publicly by public authority. Is it not ſinful and ſhameful to be men of war then in time of peace? But from it we may ſee that the luſts of moſt men have a greater power to ſet their hands to action, than their conſciences, Jam. iv. 1. Ye have reaſon

to

to decide your quarrels; if that will not do, ye have ſuperiors to do it: why ſhould men then, like unreaſonable creatures, fall a puſhing one another? But let ſuch remember, that if they repent not and reform, the day will come wherein they ſhall read their ſin in their puniſhment, Matth xxvi 52. *For all they that take the ſword, ſhall periſh with the ſword;* and God will fight againſt them for ever. See Gal. v. 19, 20 21.

3. Thoſe who are ſure to do an ill turn to thoſe who have wronged them, if it lie in their power. They will confidently promiſe it, and perform it too, and boaſt themſelves of it when they have done. It is a ſign religion is at a low paſs, and that the laws of Chriſt are little regarded among Chriſtians. Prov. xxiv 29 Matth. v. 44, 45. Alas! how ſhall we prove ourſelves Chriſtians indeed living at that rate? How would we ſuffer loſs of liberty, goods, and life for Chriſt, with a ſpirit of meekneſs, when every private wrong can provoke our vengeance? What would they do more who never heard of Chriſt? It is worthleſs religion that puts not men to be followers of the meek and lowly Jeſus.

4. *Laſtly*, Thoſe who make no conſcience of doing their duty to thoſe who have wronged them, but they carry towards them as if their offence looſed them from all bonds of duty to them, and ſo ſatisfy their revenge, Matth. v 44 — 46. One's being out of their duty to us, is not enough for us to neglect our duty to them. Alas! what would become of us, if God treated us at this rate, withdrawing his mercies from us upon every provocation? *Be followers of God.*

Use *ult.* Revenge not yourſelves, but rather give place to wrath, the wrath of your adverſary. To preſs this, I offer the following motives.

1. This is true excellency and bravery of ſpirit. Men are much miſtaken in their meaſures, who count otherwiſe. For,

(1.) In this ye will resemble the Spirit Jesus Christ was actuated by, 1 Pet ii. 23. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. Luke xxiii. 34. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." *Ye shall be as gods*, was the height of ambition that men aspired to very soon. Behold an allowable way how we may be like our Lord! in meekness and patience, suffering wrong rather than avenging at our own hand. This was the way how Christ, being true God as well as man, did walk. And therefore it is true excellency of spirit. When James and John would have revenged an affront offered to Christ by the inhospitable Samaritans, by commanding fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, "He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them," Luke ix 55, 56. He had legions of angels at his command, yet he says, *Father, forgive them*, Luke xxiii. 34.

(2.) Ye will shew a generous contempt of the impotent malice of an evil world, possessing yourselves in the midst of all the sallies of it upon you, Luke xxi. 19 *In patience possess ye your souls.* The moon retains her brightness, though the cur barks at her: and an excellent spirit retains its composure, notwithstanding of the little rubs one meets with in an evil world.

(3.) Ye will shew yourselves masters of your own spirit; and many who have won cities by storm, have been trod under foot by their own spirits; which shews victory over the latter to be a more glorious thing than over the former, Prov. xvi. 32. "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

(4.) Ye will overcome him that wrongs you. Either

ther you will gain him to return to his duty, Rom. xii. 20 or ye will at least keep your ground while his corruption carries him out of the road, and tends to drive you off your road too. So he is the true overcomer, not who does the wrong, but who bears it with patience, Rom. viii. 37. "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

2. Consider the wrong done to God by your revenging yourselves. Ye take out of his hand what he has reserved for himself on good grounds; ye invade his sovereign authority, and pull a jewel out of the crown of heaven to adorn yourselves, Deut. xxxii. 35 forecited. Thus,

(1) Ye impeach his justice, as if he like Gallio cared for none of these things, so that unless ye revenged yourselves, your wrongs would never be righted. This is the blasphemous language of that practice: for who believeth that a just God will revenge all wrongs, would take it out of his hand?

(2.) Ye impeach his wisdom, in committing vengeance into the hands of those in authority, saying, in effect, that it would be far better to leave that to private men, and that God's method of vengeance is not fitted to reach the end. And therefore ye will correct the ordinance of heaven.

(3.) Ye impeach his veracity, and refuse to believe his word, that he will repay. And therefore ye will repay injuries yourselves, as if God's word were not to be believed.

(4) Ye dare his vengeance. If he is the God of vengeance, and will repay, sure he will take vengeance on those who thus contemn and invade his authority.

Now what wrong can any man possibly do to you, that will justify your doing such wrong to God?

3. Revenge is a most ensnaring thing, not to be harboured in the least. It is a sacrifice to passion, and involves the soul in guilt that way. It often carries men into such heights, as afterwards they would wish they had not gone to when it is past remedy. How

many has revenge brought to an ill end? Yea, how many have been brought into compact with the devil by this means?

4. *Laſtly*, It is inconſiſtent with peace with heaven and pardon. They who live in a courſe of revengeful paſſions, are living in a ſtate of black nature, Tit iii 3. Our Saviour is expreſs in that, Matth. vi. 15. "If ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes." How can ye go to God, to pray for pardon, when ye will not forgive thoſe that ſin againſt you? So revenge puts a bar in the way of your pardon: and the guilt of ſin unpardoned will bar you out of heaven.

*Object.* The ſcripture ſaith, *Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.*

*Anſ.* That was the law, the execution of which was not committed but to the magiſtrate; and does not belong to private perſons.

*Obj.* 2. If we pick up one injury, we will get more.

*Anſ.* The text ſaith not ſo, Rom. xii. 20. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink: for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his head." But better we get never ſo many wrongs, than that we wrong God by revenging ourſelves.

*Obj.* 3. It is not manly not to revenge affronts and wrongs.

*Anſ.* As blackmoors paint the devil white, ſo do vain men their vices and corrupt paſſions. So proceeding from words to blows is manlineſs with them; whereas a little conſideration would ſhew them, that it is childiſhneſs; for ſo does nurſes ſtill their babies, by revenging them on thoſe that diſpleaſe them. It is brutiſhneſs; anger a dog, and he will be ready to flee at your face. It is fooliſhneſs, Eccl. vii. 9. "Be not haſty in thy ſpirit to be angry: for anger reſteth in the boſom of fools." Was David not manly that revenged not himſelf on Saul? Saul ſays otherwiſe, 1 Sam. xxiv. 18—21. "Thou haſt ſhewed this day how that thou haſt

haſt dealt well with me: foraſmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedſt me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the Lord reward thee good, for that thou haſt done unto me this day," &c.

*Queſt.* How then ſhould we do in the caſe of affronts and wrongs?

*Anſ.* 1. Arm yourſelves with meekneſs and patience, while you go through an evil world, laying your accounts that ye will have uſe for them, wherever ye are, and that daily.

2. Learn to bear with and forbear one another, and to be always ready to forgive the injuries done to you, ſo far as they concern yourſelves, Col iii. 13 "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any: even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye." And there is no meaſure to which this forgiving is to be ſtinted, Matth. xviii 21, 22. "Lord, (ſays Peter) how oft ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him? till ſeven times? Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee, Until ſeven times: but, until ſeventy times ſeven."

3. In matters of weight, where the good of the party offending, the public good, or your future ſafety, makes redreſs neceſſary, apply to thoſe for it who are veſted with authority for that end, Rom. xiii. 4. Only do it not from a ſpirit of revenge.

4 In that caſe, and in other caſes, wherein redreſs is not to be expected, lay the matter before the Lord, put it in his hand, and wait for him, Prov. xx. 22. "Say not thou, I will recompenſe evil: but wait on the Lord, and he ſhall ſave thee"

5. *Laſtly*, Live by faith, keeping your eye on Chriſt the fountain of ſtrength, the pattern of meekneſs, and on the judgment to come, when all wrongs ſhall be redreſſed, and juſtice ſhall be done to every body.

THE

THE

# Distinguishing Characters

OF

# TRUE BELIEVERS.

## VI. In relation to loving their Enemies *.

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### A persuasive to love our Enemies.

MATTHEW v. 44, 45.

*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

NEgative holiness is short of Christianity more than the one half. It is not enough that we do others no ill, but we must do them good as we have access. Nor is it enough that we fly not out in passion and revenge on those who have wronged us, but we must love them.

Nature teaches us to love them that love us; and so the worst of men may learn that lesson, ver 46. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" But sanctifying grace goes higher, teaching to love them that hate

* The discourses on this subject were preached at Ettrick in November and December 1724.

hate us; and this is a leſſon hard to learn. Hence the corrupt Jewiſh teachers, unable to come up to the intent of the holy law, brought down the law to their nature, and expounded the ſecond great commandment of the law conformably, ver. 43. *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.* Our Lord, who loved his enemies ſo as to die for them, does juſtice to that law here; and that end of the law which they had folded in, he folds out again, and ſtretches it out in its full length, ſo as to reach our foes as well as our friends. *But I ſay unto you, Love your enemies,* &c. In the words we have,

1. A duty enjoined, *Love your enemies.* It is ſuppoſed, that in this world every body will have ſome enemies; and want who will, Chriſt's friends will not want enemies, who will hate them, and do them any miſchief they can reach. The greateſt innocency of life, and harmleſſneſs, the greateſt uſefulneſs in the world, will not ſecure one from having enemies. Chriſt's own caſe demonſtrates this. Well, what is our duty to them? Love them. That is explained, *Bleſs them, do them good, pray for them.* That is an old commandment, Prov. xxv. 21. "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat: and if he be thirſty, give him water to drink." But it is new ſtamped with the authority and example of Jeſus. And of all coin men are fondeſt of the very old and the ſplit-new. Here are both together.

2. The neceſſity of this duty, and of obedience to this command. It is agreed among all to be the hardeſt duty of Chriſtianity. The Papiſts will have it to be not a command, but a counſel of perfection. And if moſt Proteſtants would ſpeak their hearts in this point, they would agree with them; for in effect they think and ſay, It is not for every one, it is only the attainment of ſome very rare good men; and though they cannot reach it, they are in no doubt for all that, that they belong to Chriſt. But our Lord teaches here the downright contrary, namely, the ab-

abſolute neceſſity of it to all, to Chriſtians of the ſmalleſt as well as of the greateſt ſize: *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.* Not that we muſt firſt love our enemies before we can be adopted into the family of God; but that we muſt neceſſarily evidence our ſonſhip by this, or elſe forfeit our claim to it. So *that ye may be*, is, that ye may appear to be. Adoption into the family of heaven is a great privilege. The queſtion is, Who may claim intereſt in it, and who not? They who love their enemies may claim it; for thereby they diſcover they are really God's children, they are ſo like him: they who do not, may not claim that privilege; for they really are not God's children, they are ſo unlike him.

The text affords the following inſtructive note.

DOCT. *Loving of our enemies is a neceſſary evidence, mark, and character of thoſe who are of the family of heaven.*

In diſcourſing this ſubject, I ſhall,

I. Conſider the duty of loving our enemies.

II Shew that this loving of our enemies is a neceſſary mark and evidence of a child of God.

III. Make ſome practical improvement.

I. We ſhall conſider the duty of loving our enemies. And here I ſhall ſhew,

1. Who are to be underſtood by our enemies

2 What is that love which we owe to them.

*Firſt*, I am to ſhew who are to be underſtood by our enemies. In general, it aims at thoſe about whom there is leaſt to engage our love to them. For the more our Chriſtian love is of that ſort, it is the liker to the love of God, who loves freely, and does not find the objects of it lovely, but makes them ſo. And,

1. It

1. It is not only to be underſtood of thoſe who are ſimply our enemies, but of thoſe who are enemies to God as well as to us. This is evident from the context, for the law binds us to love our neighbour, ver. 43. Every body is our neighbour in the ſenſe of the law. Therefore our enemies, even ſuch of them as are enemies to God, are our neighbours, and ſo to be loved. And upon this principle our Lord's explication goes. Again, were not ſuch as curſed, hated, and perſecuted the diſciples of Chriſt, the enemies of God as well as theirs? Yet the text will have thoſe loved. Finally, the evil and the unjuſt are ſo far loved of our heavenly Father, that he does them good: yet they are his enemies Therefore we are to love them too, if we would be like him, ver. 45.

They would do well to conſider this, who make the extent of their religion the boundaries of their love; who, if they love thoſe of their own religion and way, think they owe no love to others, but are at liberty to hate all the world beſides; and could be content to exterminate and devour them under the notion of God's enemies. This is the way of the bloody Papiſts; and be who they will that go that way, they are actuated by the ſpirit of Antichriſt, which is a ſpirit of hatred, not by the Spirit of Chriſt, which is a Spirit of love. If Chriſt had loved at that rate, there had never been a church in the world: but, as ſays the apoſtle, Rom. v 10. *When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.*

*Object.* 1. Does not the pſalmiſt ſay, Pſal cxxxix. 21, 22. "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with thoſe that riſe up againſt thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies?" And does not Jehu the ſon of Hanani the ſeer ſay to King Jehoſhaphat, *Shouldſt thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?* 2 Chron. xix 2.

*Anſ.* (1.) There is a hating of one's way and courſe, and a hating of one's perſon. It is not the latter that

is

is meant in theſe paſſages, but the former. They hate the Lord, riſe up againſt him, are ungodly; that is their courſe, which our hatred muſt fix upon. So the ſum of it is, I count them mine enemies, whoſe perſons I am obliged to love, but their enmity I am obliged to hate. So a man loves his ſick child, though he loaths his loathſome diſeaſe, and ſeeks to root it out

(2.) There is a hatred oppoſite to a love of complacency, and a hatred oppoſite to a love of good will: the former is what we ſhould bear to the enemies of God, and is there meant; the latter is not.

*Object* 2. Are not the prayers of the church bent againſt the enemies of Chriſt?

*Anſ.* Yea they are, and for them too. in different reſpects; the former in reſpect of their wicked works, the latter in reſpect of their perſons. And if there is no ſeparating of their works from their perſons, that their works are not to be deſtroyed but with the deſtruction of their perſons, *i. e.* if they be incorrigible, then ſince God's honour muſt be dearer to us than all the world, we may lawfully pray againſt their perſons too. And this is as conſiſtent with the love in the text, as a parent's calling a ſurgeon to cut off his child's gangrened leg; he loves the leg, and would heartily wiſh its preſervation; yet he muſt call for cutting it off, leſt it ruin his child's whole body. See all this, Pſal. lxxxiii 16, 17, 18. "Fill their faces with ſhame: that they may ſeek thy name, O Lord. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever: yea, let them be put to ſhame; and periſh: that men may know, that thou whoſe name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Moſt High over all the earth."

2. It is to be underſtood of thoſe who are adverſaries to us, or are againſt us any manner of way, whether they in that matter be againſt God or not. And ſo it takes in,

1*ſt*, Thoſe who are not truly and properly our enemies, but in our account and reckoning only are enemies,

mies to us. And here is an occaſion of the exerciſe of this grace and duty, as well as in the caſe of the moſt real enemy to us. For though one be not indeed your enemy, yet if you think him to be ſo, it is all a caſe to you to love him, as to love one that is really ſo; and if you reach it, it will be certainly acceptable to God, it will not be loſt: for though it is your weakneſs to miſtake one for your enemy who is not to, yet it is your excellency to love one whom you take for your enemy, Luke xxiv. 1. So this love is owing,

(1.) To thoſe whom we take for our enemies, but are really only ſmiting friends. Wounding friends in a childiſh ſickly world oftimes go under the name of enemies; while kiſſing enemies are taken for friends, Prov. xxvii. 6. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kiſſes of an enemy are deceitful." So it fared with Paul among the Galatians, chap. iv. 16. *Am I therefore become your enemy*, ſays he to them, *becauſe I tell you the truth?* Much enmity is raiſed this way in the world. A ſound reproof for ſin, an oppoſing of perſons in ſinful courſes, is ſufficient in the world to make enemies, and then the war is denounced againſt them, Amos v 1. "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate." But if theſe muſt needs be your enemies, love them according to the text, ſaying with David, Pſal. cxli. 5. "Let the righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a kindneſs; and let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent oil, which ſhall not break my head: for yet my prayer alſo ſhall be in their calamities."

(2.) To thoſe whom we take for our enemies, but are only competitors with us in a lawful way. There is ſo much ſelfiſhneſs in the world, and ſo little regard to the intereſt of our neighbour, that a great many imaginary enemies are made this way. Thus Joſeph's brethren took him for their enemy, and purſued the quarrel againſt him. So a man's purſuing in a lawful way for his own, what enmity does that many times breed among men? Perſons of the ſame employment or occupation, what envy, grudge, and enmity is raiſed

among them on that very head? Where there is an advantageous bargain to which all are alike free, how often is the man that gets it looked on as an enemy to the reſt? And at bottom it is juſt becauſe he is a friend to himſelf, which all the world muſt allow. ſo it be in a lawful way. But if ſuch muſt needs be enemies. know you ought to love your enemies.

*2dly*, Thoſe who are indeed our enemies, whom we reckon ſo, and who are truly what we reckon them. Here is occaſion for the exerciſe of this grace and duty: and it is not likely that any body appearing in the world wants ſuch occaſion. If they belong to God they will not want it, Luke vi 29. Let all then take heed that they be found in the way of this duty. Theſe enemies are of two ſorts, but all of them to be loved, according to the text.

(1.) Stated enemies, in reſpect of a courſe of enmity. And theſe,

[1.] Stated public enemies, who, in their principles and by open profeſſion, are oppoſite to us, and practiſe accordingly. Such were the unbelieving Jews, particularly the Scribes and Phariſees, to the followers of Chriſt, inwardly hating them, openly curſing them, and accordingly perſecuting them. But, ſays our text, *love your enemies*. This party-enmity is frequent in the world, and it is the bane of the church. It is the native fruit of the corruption of our nature. Men are by a certain propenſity of nature led to hate and bear enmity and grudge againſt thoſe they differ from: it grows up like thiſtles and other weeds of its own accord, ſo that no man ſhall be kept from it, if he ſet not himſelf by grace to bear it down, and root it up. And the miſchief of it is in church-differences eſpecially, that people look on this brood of hell as the off-ſpring of heaven, and ſo call it zeal and duty; and the more of it they have, think they are the better men. Hence ſaid our Lord John xvi. 2. "The time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice." But O how far are they deceived in this! Jam. iii. 13. *&c.*

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Our Lord cruſhed the appearance of this in his diſciples, Luke ix. 54, 55. Nay, he ſhed his blood to quench this unhallowed fire, Eph ii 16. "That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the croſs, having ſlain the enmity thereby." This is the deſign of the parable of the man that fell among the thieves, Luke x 30.

[2] Stated private enemies, who ſet themſelves in a courſe of enmity againſt ſuch and ſuch perſons. Such enemies were Herod and Pilate to one another, Luke xxiii. 12. We call this ſtate *variance*, Gal v. 20. and this kind of enmity *feud*, a ſettled, ſtated, continued enmity. Such had Joſeph's brethren againſt him, Ahab againſt Micaiah, and Abſalom againſt his brother Amnon. This is frequent every-where, ſpreading itſelf like venom among neighbours, yea among relations, and among neighbours of all ſorts. And they that have ſuch enemies, think it not to be enough to be wiſe as ſerpents, to be on their guard as to them; but they think they are warranted to join therewith the venom of the ſerpent too: and ſo they are even with them. Hence they will not ſpeak together, but on all occaſions are ſure to be at them, and to bear hard on one another, purſuing their war. But this is not the way of God: on the contrary, ſays the ſcripture, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat: and if he be thirſty, give him water to drink, Prov xxv. 21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," Rom xii. 21. See the law, Exod xxiii. 4. 5. Theſe things will exclude men out of heaven, Gal v. 21.

(2) Occaſional enemies, who upon particular emergent occaſions, do wrong to us; but not from a ſtated enmity againſt us. If we are to love our ſtated enemies, much more theſe, Col. iii. 13. There are thouſands of enmities of this nature: and ſuch is the weakneſs and corruption of our nature, that there is no body but, either through inadvertency or the power of temptation, do thus wrong others. So that if men muſt hate thoſe who ſo treat them, they will be Iſhmael-like, having their hand againſt every man they have to do

with, &c. But it is utterly unlike the goſpel to blow up theſe ſparks into a fire. But love ſuch enemies notwithſtanding: for "if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes," Matth. vi. 15.

Both theſe kinds of enemies are of three ſorts.

[1] Heart-enemies, who in their hearts are ſet againſt us, burning with grudge, malice, and rancour at us. The text is plain as to our duty in that caſe, *Do good to them that hate you.* Love begets love, even among thoſe void of the grace of God; ſo if ye love them who love you, ye are not one ſtep beyond the profane in that point, ver. 46. But if ye would ſhew the power of God's grace in you, ye muſt be heart-friends to your heart-enemies, having your heart towards them, whoſe heart is away from you.

[2] Tongue-enemies, who enploy their tongues againſt us like ſwords, arrows, fire, and ſcourges. *Bleſs them that curſe you.* Theſe are very dangerous enemies, and ſometimes give very deep and galling wounds, Pſal. lvii. 4. "My ſoul, (ſays David,) is among lions, and I lie even among them that are ſet on fire, even the ſons of men, whoſe teeth are ſpears and arrows, and their tongue a ſharp ſword." One does not know how to get out of their way. Men may flee from the hands of their enemies, but who can flee from their tongues? Only God himſelf can be a refuge herein, Job v. 21. 'Thou ſhalt be hid from the ſcourge of the tongue.' But even to theſe you owe love, Pſal. cix. 3, 4, 5. And tongue-love will not pay that debt, it muſt be heart-love, Prov. x. 18. Wit may furniſh the former, but true wiſdom muſt furniſh the latter in that caſe.

[3.] Hand enemies, who in their actions and deeds are enemies to us; not only in their hearts wiſhing us ill, and with their tongues ſpeaking ill of us, but to their power, and as they have occaſion, doing ill to us, "Pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you." Our Lord binds us even to love theſe, and that while they are doing againſt us. So he gave us ex-

example, Luke xxiii. 34. 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' So the firſt martyr followed the bleſſed example, Acts vii. 60. 'Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge.' And ſo muſt we ſhew ourſelves to be the children of the bleſſing, 1 Pet iii. 9. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwiſe, bleſſing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit a bleſſing" The corrupt heart's motion is to do ill for ill, but by grace we muſt do good for ill: that is heaven's exchange.

SECONDLY, I come to ſhew what that love is which we owe to our enemies: We muſt love them. It is neceſſary to explain this, both negatively and poſitively.

*Firſt*, Negatively. We are not bound to love them,

1. So as for their ſakes to be reconciled to and at peace with their ſin. Our Lord obliges us to love the perſons of our enemies, but not the wrong they do to us, and much leſs the wrong they do to God. We are not, under pretence of this love, to give over oppoſing them in evil: that were to hate them, nor to love them, whatever they may think, Lev. xix 17. Or if it is called love, it is to love them more than God, 1 Sam. ii. 29. We muſt love and ſtrive to pleaſe one another, but *to edification, not to deſtruction.* Not only does the father love his child, though he chaſtens him; but becauſe he loves him, therefore he chaſtens him And the more we love any truly, the more we will hate their ſin.

2. Neither does this love bar ſeeking redreſs of wrongs in an orderly way. If God had meant that men ſhould be in the earth, like the fiſhes in the ſea, where the greater ſwallow up the leſſer, without poſſibility of redreſs, nothing being left to the weaker but to yield themſelves, he had never appointed the magiſtrate, 'a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil' Rom. xiii. 4. And Jeſus Chriſt never extended his precepts to the pulling down of the fence of human ſociety, government, governours, and laws: And what he ſaid of turning the other cheek to him that ſmote the one, himſelf explained, John xviii. 23. "If I have

ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil: but if well, why ſmiteſt thou me?" being ready to receive a ſecond ſtroke rather than to revenge that he had got; but withal complaining of the wrong before a judge. Men may do this, and love the enemy that wrongs them notwithſtanding.

3. Neither doth it bind us to a love of complacency in them. That is, we are not obliged to take delight in them, make them our intimate and familiar companions, aſſociate with them as with our friends, being in a courſe of enmity againſt God. Jehoſhaphat was reproved for that, 2 Chron. xix. 2. David makes it a mark of his ſincerity, that he abſtained from it, Pſal. cxxxix 21. Solomon tells us, Prov xiii 20. "He that walketh with wiſe men ſhall be wiſe: but a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed." And every-where the ſcripture calls us off from complacency and intimate communion with evil men. It holds too in the caſe of of thoſe who are really our enemies ſimply, otherwiſe we were to make no difference between our friends and our foes; hence ſays Chriſt, Matth. x 16, 17. "Behold, I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves: be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will ſcourge you in their ſynagogues." Wiſe walking is a Chriſtian duty, wherein the wiſdom of the ſerpent is kept, but ſeparate from its venom, Prov. xiv. 15. *The prudent man looketh well to his going.*

*Secondly*, Poſitively. There is a threefold love that uſes to be diſtinguiſhed. (1.) A love of complacency; (2.) of good will; and, (3) of beneficence. As to the firſt, I have already ſhewed, that it is not owing to our real enemies. Our Lord bids us *bleſs*, but not ſing and rejoice with thoſe that curſe us: *do good to*, but not delight in and take them into our boſom, that hate us: *pray for*, but not aſſociate, as with our beſt friends, with thoſe who deſpitefully uſe us, and perſecute us. It is the two latter kinds of love that we owe to them.

And

And this is evidently clear from the whole to this context, to be the full compaſs of the love of our enemies; which is explained,

1. Of the love of good-will to them, ver. 44. "Bleſs them,—pray for them. So ver. 47. If ye ſalute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans ſo?" The publicans ſalute, *i..e.* bear and ſhew good will to thoſe who bear and ſhew it to them.

2. Of the love of beneficence, ver. 44. *Do good to them.* So do the publicans, ver 46. rewarding one another's good deeds. Of theſe two it is explained from God's own example, ver. 45. "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt." God doth not entertain a love of complacency in evil and unjuſt men; but that is the peculiar portion of the good and juſt from the Lord. But he follows the evil and the good, juſt and unjuſt, with a love of good-will, making his ſun to riſe on them; ſo heaven opens its eye, and looks to them as wiſhing them well. And he follows them with a love of beneficence, making his rain to fall, whereby fruitful ſeaſons are made.

Theſe two together make the perfection of that love that men promiſcuouſly are fit objects of, ver. 48. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." If ye conſider men as juſt and good, they are fit objects of the divine and human complacency: as evil and unjuſt, they are not fit objects of the one nor of the other. But the worſt of them may be fit objects of good will and beneficence. And God's love is perfect in affording them both theſe; and if we alſo afford them the ſame, our love that we owe to them will be perfect too, no due part being lacking. Then,

*Firſt*, We owe to our enemies, our real enemies, a love of good-will, Rom xiii. 9. *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.* Our hearts ought to be lovingly diſpoſed towards them, and they to have a room in them,

them, as we when we were yet enemies had in the heart of Chriſt. If we be not ſo diſpoſed, we have not the Spirit of Chriſt. Good-will is a debt we owe to mankind, even the worſt of them: and though it takes nothing out of our pocket it is not eaſily paid. There is need of a ſtock of grace, for nature's ſtock will ſoon be exhauſted, Tit. iii. 3. This good-will lies in,

1. We muſt not wiſh them ill as ill to them, Pſal. xl. 14. We muſt pluck up the roots from which ill wiſhes to them do ſpring up. Envy, which looks with an ill eye on their welfare, and would eat it up, James iii. 16; hatred, which blocks up all good from us to them, Lev. xix. 17; grudge, which is a train lying within the heart, ready to be blown up on occaſion for miſchief to them, Lev. xix. 18.; and malice, which like a burning fire purſues them with ill-will, Eph. iv. 31. Our ill wiſhes can do them no ill, but they do ourſelves much. Every ill wiſh is an item in our accounts before God, and the reigning root of ill-will to our neighbour proves one to be naught, 1 John ii. 11. "He that hateth his brother, is in darkneſs, and walketh in darkneſs, and knoweth not whither he goeth, becauſe that darkneſs hath blinded his eyes."

But this extends not to theſe two caſes. (1.) The wiſhing one an ill for good to him, *e. g.* the loſing of ſuch an one's favour, the having of which is a ſnare to his ſoul: the lowering of one's outward circumſtances, whoſe proſperity makes him forget God and himſelf. But in this caſe the thing wiſhed, though in itſelf an evil, is wiſhed as a mean of good, and of good to the perſon. (2.) The wiſhing evil to a perſon for the good of many, as that one who is a corrupter of others, and incorrigible in it, may be taken out of the way. For the honour of God and the public good is always preferable to the private good of one, Gal. v. 12.

2. We muſt not take pleaſure in any ill that befals them, as ill to them, Prov. xxiv. 17. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he ſtumbleth." To make the miſeries of

others

others our delight, is unbecoming the ſpirit of the goſpel; it is a feeding with the ſerpent on duſt; that is to ſay, a joining iſſue with the devil in our rejoicing. But O how much of that ſpirit is in the world; yea, how naturally does the heart of man take that bias! Though perhaps men will not do them ill, yet it is a pleaſure to them, to hear of others doing it, or of Providence's reaching them ſome ſtroke. The former caſes muſt be excepted here too. But otherwiſe it is a very wicked diſpoſition, to take pleaſure in our enemy's hurt. Job clears himſelf in that point, Job xxxi. 29. "If I rejoiced at the deſtruction of him that hated me, or lift up myſelf when evil found him." There is no exception, Rom. xii. 15. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

3. We muſt heartily wiſh them well, 1 Tim. i. 5. 'Pray for them,' ſays the text. We muſt wiſh them the beſt things, that they may be for ever happy; may have favour and peace with God, Luke xxii. 34; and that for that cauſe God may grant them faith, repentance, and all other ſaving graces. For it is a vain wiſh, and worſe than vain, to wiſh people happy living and going on in their ſins: therefore our wiſhes muſt be ſo regulated as God's ſtated method of grace may be kept in due regard. And as for other things that are temporal, we muſt wiſh them theſe as they may beſt promote thoſe ends.

4. We muſt wiſh them well, as well to them, Pſal. cxxii 8. Men may wiſh well to their enemies, from a mere carnal principle, not as being well for them, but for themſelves. That is, they may wiſh them repentance, &c. for their own eaſe, not from any love to their ſouls. But God ſees through that, and will account it no more than it is, that is, ſelf-love, not love to our enemies. To overlook our own intereſt, and from love to God, and our neighbour, to wiſh well to thoſe that are our enemies, is worthy of a Chriſtian.

*Secondly*, We owe to our enemies, our real enemies,

a love of beneficence, whereby we will be ready to do them good as we have acceſs: and therefore ſays the apoſtle, 1 John iii 18 "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." And certain it is, that where the heart in good earneſt wiſheth them good, the tongue and the hands will be ready to do them the good we wish them, and can do them. Man was born for ſociety, and no man was born for himſelf only, but is obliged to ſeek the good of others too: and their enmity to us looſeth not that bond.

1. We muſt not practiſe revenge upon them, by doing one ill turn for another they have done us. Rom. xii. 19. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourſelves, but rather give place unto wrath." They that are fartheſt behind with their neighbour here, are in beſt caſe: for revenge for wrongs done is a debt that will be paid, and the longer it is a-paying, it will be the heavier charge at length. But God has kept the clearing of that debt in his own hand, and we are not to middle with it. Revenging ourſelves on our enemies is the utmoſt remove from the love we owe to them. It is hatred, flaming hatred againſt them, inſtead of love. It tends to their deſtruction, and therefore denominates men *murderers* before the Lord, 1 John iii 15 O that men would conſider how they will anſwer it to him, who having ſet us a pattern, commands us to love our enemies. So forbearing poſitive revenge is the loweſt ſtep of this love.

2 We muſt not with-hold from them the good that is due to them from us by any particular tie; but muſt be ſure to be in our duty to them, though they be out of their duty to us, Prov. iii. 27 "With-hold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." It is not enough that we do them no ill, but we muſt do them the good we owe them, by whatſoever ſuch tie, whether they be ſpecial neighbours, or nearer relations. For the duty we owe one to another in our relations, is not founded

on

on mere compact, that when the one breaks the other is looſe; but upon the authority of God, which binds both parties. If men would then turn their eyes upward, and look to God as the common Maſter, they would find reaſon from his command, to continue in their duty to thoſe who caſt off their duty to them, as far as they can have acceſs.

3. We muſt be ready to do them good as Providence puts an opportunity in our hand, Gal. vi. 10 "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men" This love of beneficence takes in this alſo as the crowning ingredient, the higheſt ſtep in it. (1.) We muſt do them no ill. (2.) We muſt do them all the good we owe them, and they can challenge of us by any particular tie. But we muſt go higher yet, and, (3) Do them all the good that we have acceſs to do them, though they cannot challenge it by any particular tie. Here is a general tie in the text, to make up that want: and in theſe caſes though they cannot challenge it of us, our God and Lord can and doth. The Jews who crucified Chriſt, and ſtoned Stephen, could not demand their prayers for them as a debt they owed them by a particular bond: but the extenſive law of love required them, and Chriſt fulfilled that law in that as in other points; and Stephen wrote after his copy. So that it will not be ſufficient to ſhift a good work towards ſuch and ſuch perſons, to ſay we owe them none. Now we muſt be ready to do them good,

1*ſt*, In their temporal intereſt, Rom xii. 20. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirſt, give him drink: for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his head." Thus our Lord Jeſus went about doing good in the midſt of his enemies, healing their ſick, curing their blind, &c. He was a public benefactor, though in the mean time he was the object of the public enmity. So if it lie in our way to advance their temporal intereſt, and do them a good turn for that end, we muſt not with-hold it, whatever enmity they ſhew or have ſhewn to us.

2*dly*, In

2*dly*, In their ſpiritual intereſt, contributing our utmoſt endeavours as we have acceſs for their eternal happineſs, Prov. xi 30. *He that winneth ſouls is wiſe.* Thus Chriſt and his apoſtles gave us an example, in their thirſting for the ſoul-good of the Jews, their declared enemies. When the winning or loſing of a ſoul comes in competition with any wrong done to us, that wrong is not worth noticing; for the redemption of the ſoul is precious above all. And for both theſe we muſt be ready,

(1.) To ſpeak for their good: for a good word is often of ſuch uſefulneſs to men, that it may be reckoned among good deeds. This was Jeremiah's comfort, that he had ſo done for his people, who were very abuſive to him, chap. xviii. 20. "Shall evil be recompenſed for good? for they have digged a pit for my ſoul: remember that I ſtood before thee to ſpeak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them." And when we may advance the good of thoſe who are our enemies by our ſpeaking for them, then is the time to ſpeak.

(2.) To act for their good, Rom. xii. 20. forecited. The ſpirit of the goſpel diſpoſeth men not only to uſe their tongues, but their hands for the good of their enemies; and to abide ſome ſtreſs themſelves, for doing good to them, Rom. v. 7. 8. "For ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man ſome would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us." If men pleaſe themſelves with giving one good words for their enemies, while they have acceſs to do them good deeds, but will not, we may ſay, *What doth that profit?* James ii. 16.

For all this we muſt be,

1.) Habitually diſpoſed to beneficence towards them. The habitual bent and frame of our ſouls ſhould be to do good to all, our enemies not excepted. For that is the native effect of the writing of the law of love on the heart.

2.) We

2.) We muſt readily fall in with any ſpecial opportunity that Providence puts in our hand for that effect, Gal. vi. 10. How do ill men ſtrike in with an opportunity to do an ill turn to their enemies? So would we ſhew ourſelves Chriſtians, by ſtriking in with an occaſion of doing good to our enemies, as knowing that then God is putting us to the trial in that point.

II. The next general head is to ſhew, that this loving of our enemies is a neceſſary mark and evidence of a child of God. Ye have heard what it is not, and what it is: conſider now that you muſt either reach it, or forfeit your claim to God as your Father. I do not ſay, that without perfection in it ye cannot make that claim. It is our duty indeed, but we can no more reach a perfection of degrees in it, than in other graces and duties. But the reaching of it in a perfection of parts, the ſincere aiming at, and endeavouring it, as other graces and neceſſary duties, in the habitual courſe of our lives, is ſuch a neceſſary mark and evidence of a child of God, as appears from the following conſiderations.

1. The living in malice and envy againſt any, is an evidence of one in the black ſtate of nature, a child of hell. Hence ſays the apoſtle, Tit. iii. 3. "We ourſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." The ſcripture calls our natural ſtate *the gall of bitterneſs*, Acts viii 21, 23. and natural men *a generation of vipers*, Matth. iii. 7. Men falling into enmity againſt God, fell into enmity one againſt another, and, rendering themſelves hateful to God, came alſo to hate one another: and there is no effectual cure for it, till they return to God the centre of unity. See it in the caſe of our firſt parents. So this reigning enmity againſt any is the native produce of man's apoſtate ſtate, diſcovering it as ſurely as ſmoke does fire. Therefore love to our enemies is a neceſſary mark and evidence of a child of God.

2. To love our friends and hate our enemies, is nothing above the reach of nature, as corrupt as it is. The Phariſees, that generation of vipers, as ſhort as they cut the law, left ſo much of it in that point, Matth. v. 43. "Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." The worſt of men may do that; ſelf love teaches it, and produces it: therefore there is no body, but they bear love to ſome others. But ſurely Chriſtianity muſt carry men farther than the worſt of men; therefore a true Chriſtian muſt neceſſarily love both his friends and enemies, ſince there is no medium betwixt theſe, ver 46, 47. The true Chriſtian muſt love all men, ſince the worſt of men love ſome: elſe the children of heaven and of hell are alike.

3. The want of it will evince the perſon to want the true love of God; and he who wants that, ſurely is not a child of God, but a child of the devil. Men will perſuade themſelves, that though they can have no love to ſuch and ſuch a one whom they look on as their enemy; yet they love God, and that is enough. But hear what the Spirit of God ſays in this caſe, 1 John iv. 20. "If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?" Men do not love God truly, who cannot love men for his ſake: and the love of our friends is loving for our own ſake, if we do not love our enemies too. For if we loved for God's ſake, then we would love all whom he bids us: but ſticking at the love of our enemies ſo expreſsly required by him, ſhews that we do not love God, ſince we will not do that for his ſake. If we love ourſelves, we muſt love our friends, becauſe they love us: but the great trial is in the love of our enemies, where we cannot fetch the arguments for loving them from ourſelves, but from God.

4. It is a neceſſary conſequent of regeneration, and without that no man ſhall ſee heaven, 1 John iii. 9, 10. "Who-

"Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin, for his ſeed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the devil: Whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." If we be God's children, we have got the new nature, and old things are done away. Then we will be no more living in malice, hateful, and hating one another. But theſe things will be laid aſide. Hence it is propheſied of the goſpel-days, Iſ. xi. 6. "The wolf alſo ſhall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard ſhall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child ſhall lead them." If we are born again, the law is written on our hearts, Heb. viii. 10. whereof love is the ſum; and particularly the loving of our neighbour as ourſelves, is the ſecond great commandment. And it is evident from the ſcriptures, that our enemy is our neighbour in the ſenſe of the law. So if we are not diſpoſed to love our enemies, we are not diſpoſed to love our neighbour; and if we do not that, the law is not written on our hearts; and if it is not written, we are not born again, and ſo are not God's children.

5. If we love not our enemies, we are not like God; and if we be not like him, we are not his children; for all his children have his Spirit in them, Gal. iv. 6. and they all bear his image, Col. iii. 10. Therefore ſays our Lord, Matth. v. 45. "Love your enemies—that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt." God loves even thoſe that are his enemies, ſeeking their good, and doing them good; yea, "He loved the world ſo, (while yet enemies,) that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life," John iii. 16. If we look to the work of creation, he gave us our being, and the whole world; if to providence, he ſuſtains us by his bounty; if to redemption, "God commended

his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us," Rom. v. 8. How can we then be like him, if we love not our enemies?

6. If we love not our enemies, we have not the Spirit of Chriſt, and ſo are none of his, Rom viii. 9. Our Lord Jeſus gave us a moſt complete pattern of love, extending to our enemies as well as friends. He ſought the good of all, the hurt of none; he did good to thoſe who did ill to him; he prayed for them who uſed him moſt deſpitefully; nay he died for them by whoſe hands he himſelf died. We can never then be reckoned his diſciples, and of his family, nor to have his Spirit, without we love our enemies.

7. *Laſtly*, Without this we are murderers in the ſight of God, and ſo have no ſhare in eternal life, 1 John iii. 15. "Whoſoever hateth his brother, is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." We ſhew ourſelves the children of the grand murderer, and ſo muſt have our portion with him.

I conclude this ſubject with ſome practical improvement.

USE I. of information. This ſhews us, that,

1. It is not eaſy to be a Chriſtian indeed, however eaſy it is to take on the name and profeſſion of it. Chriſtianity has in it ſupernatural truths to be believed, and ſupernatural duties to be done; which the arms of natural abilities are too ſhort to reach. Divine grace is abſolutely neceſſary for theſe.

2. Chriſtianity lies in a Chriſtian or Chriſt-like diſpoſition of heart, and a conduct of life agreeable thereto, Jam. i. 22. There is a power of godlineſs, which caſts the heart into a mould of conformity with the example of Chriſt, and regulates the life in a ſuitableneſs thereto. Where that power is wanting, there is no true godlineſs.

3. Thoſe who pick and chuſe in religion, taking the eaſier, and not meddling with the difficult duties thereof laid before them, do but deceive themſelves. Though

Though ye love profeſſors of religion, and the children of God who are friendly to you; for all that ye are none of God's family, if ye love not your enemies too. The falſe mother wou'd have the child divided; Pharaoh would have let Iſrael go, if they would but have left a part with him. But we muſt either take on Chriſt's whole yoke, or none at all.

4. Chriſtianity is the beſt friend of human ſociety. O how happy might the world be if it ſhould obtain! What peace, ſafety, and eaſe would there be among nations, in neighbourhoods, and in families? It would be an effectual quench-coal to all the fightings, quarrellings, jarrings, ſtrifes, and wrongs, that take away the comfort of ſociety. There are indeed profeſſors of religion, who are fire-brands and peſts to ſociety, by their injuſtice, contention, &c. but better a millſtone were hanged about their neck, and they caſt into the midſt of the ſea, than that ſuch things ſhould take place: Jam. iv. 1. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your luſts, that war in your members?"

5. *Laſtly*, There are few Chriſtians in the world; the children of God's family are very rare; even as rare as they are who love their enemies. For the one and the other are of equal latitude. The children of this world are hateful, and hating one another; the badge of the ſaints is love, which is rare to be ſeen.

Use II. Hereby ye may diſcern, whether ye are the children of God or not. This is an evidence propoſed by Chriſt himſelf, the elder brother of the family. All thoſe of the family of heaven capable of loving or hating their neighbour, have the Spirit of the family, which is a benign and favourable one, cauſing them to love even their enemies with a love of good will and beneficence. So this writes death to, and excludes out of the number of the children of God,

1. All thoſe whoſe hearts are ſo ſoured with the real or imaginary wrongs they conceive themſelves to have received from ſuch and ſuch perſons, that they cannot find in their hearts really and truly to wiſh them

well: but they deſire, ſeek, long, and thirſt for miſchief to befal them, that they may have the ſatisfaction of it. This is the badge of the devil's family, Tit. iii. 3. and ſpeaks one's ſpirit to be leavened of hell. It is the venom of the ſerpent appearing in his ſeed, whatever profeſſion they make, Matth. iii. 7. It was eminent in the ſcribes and Phariſees; and is ordinarily moſt virulent in hypocritical profeſſors, becauſe of their reigning pride and ſelf-love. To all ſuch we may ſay, 'Ye ſerpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?' Matth. xxiii. 33.

2. All thoſe whoſe ſpirits are ſo bitter againſt thoſe who are or are accounted their enemies, that their hands are quite bound up from doing them a good turn lying in their way, but on the contrary will do them an ill turn if they can. This is the *malignity* that is the brand of hell, Rom. i. 29. to which the malignant ſpirit prompts men: and it reigns in thoſe of the devil's family, who like Cain are *of that wicked one*. They muſt be revenged, and vengeance ſhall certainly be taken on them: they cannot forgive, and therefore they cannot be forgiven. Wo muſt be to them for ever, for the meaſure they met ſhall be meaſured to them.

On the other hand, this doctrine ſpeaks comfort to thoſe who are ſo diſpoſed habitually, as heartily to wiſh well to their enemies, and evidence it by doing them the good they have acceſs to do them; and that from an inward principle of love to them, flowing from the love of God, and from a ſenſe of the command of Chriſt. See the text. No doubt hypocrites and carnal men may have the counterfeit of this. But ye may ſafely take the comfort of love to your enemies,

(1) If it be a loving of them in deed and in truth, and not in word and tongue only, 1 John iii 18. Men for their own ſake may give their enemies their beſt words and wiſhes, while theſe are but a white cover of black hatred. But happy they who are real in their good wiſhes to them, and evidence the ſame by their deeds, as they have opportunity.

(2.) If it be evangelical in its ſpring and riſe. A good humour, ſome particular intereſt of men's own, may go far in the counterfeit of this. But the true love to our enemies riſes from goſpel-principles. The man conſiders his own natural enmity to God, the acts of enmity againſt God which himſelf is often falling into, the love of God to us while yet enemies in giving Chriſt for us, *&c.*; and his ſoul is ſoftened and melted down into this love.

(3.) *Laſtly*, If it be univerſal, not extending to ſome only for whom we retain a particular regard, but to all whom we take for our enemies. For if the ſpring of it be evangelical, it will be univerſal: ſince in that caſe the reaſon for bearing that love to one, is a reaſon for bearing it to all; for being in charity with all the world.

USE *ult.* Evidence yourſelves children of God, members of the family of heaven, by loving your enemies. Set yourſelves to the conſcientious practice of this duty, lying aſide all hatred, malice, and revenge againſt others. To preſs this, let me ſuggeſt the following motives.

1. It is the command of God and his Son Jeſus Chriſt. God gave us that command, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.* Chriſt opened it, and particularly enforced it as to our enemies. And it is not a naked command, but backed with the example of God and Chriſt, which muſt have weight with all who have any regard to either.

2. Ye were baptized in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, all of you, and many of you have communicated in the Lord's ſupper. Since ye have taken on the external badge of the family, walk as becomes members of that holy ſociety. Ye were baptized into Chriſt's death, which was for his enemies: the ſupper is the commemoration of his dying for us while yet enemies. How natively then do they bind to this duty?

3. The more ye have of this, ye are the more like God;

God; the leſs ye have of it, ye are the more unlike him. Here is a piece of holy ambition, to ſtrive to be more like God, in univerſal good-will and beneficence. Here is your true glory.

4. This is the way to be uſeful in the world. You will be uſeful for God this way, who will be much honoured by it, John xv. 8. "Herein is my Father glorified, (ſays Chriſt,) that ye bear much fruit. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Ye are a peculiar people; that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light." Ye will be uſeful to others; particularly ye may be uſeful to your very enemies, Rom. xii. 20, 21. And this is a noble thing; for *it is more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

5. It will be much to your own advantage. While others rack and torment themſelves with their impotent malice, ye will enjoy a calm and ſerenity in your own minds. You will have the ſatisfaction of the teſtimony of your own conſcience, that you are not enemies to them, but in charity with them, 2 Cor. i. 12.

6. *Laſtly*, Your claim to the family of God depends on it. The enmity of wicked men will periſh in a little, Eccl ix. 6.; but they will eat the bitter fruits of it for ever in hell. And you will eat the fruit of love in heaven.

I ſhall conclude with a few directions,

1. Come to Chriſt, and unite with him by faith, Heb. xi. 6. Without this ye will never reach this nor any other duty acceptably. Until ye believe, ye are in the gall of bitterneſs; and the grapes of love to our enemies will never be gathered off ſuch thiſtles. Without it ye cannot have the new nature, 2 Cor. v. 17. for it is in Chriſt only we are made partakers of the divine, and the power of the deviliſh nature is done away. Without faith ye cannot love God truly, 1 John iv. 19. How then will you love your enemies? Would ye quench the helliſh fire of malice, hatred, and revenge in your breaſts? go inward, and ſee to your own ſouls caſe in the firſt place, ſhew a love to your own periſh-

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ng ſouls, be convinced of your ſin and miſery, and betake yourſelves to Chriſt in the promiſe of the goſpel. Then will ye be capable of this Chriſt-like diſpoſition and duty.

2. Bear up in your hearts a deep ſenſe of your own ſinfulneſs, with the faith of pardon thereof. This will natively produce it, Tit. iii. 2, 3. A ſenſe of our own ſinfulneſs againſt God, will blunt the edge of the enmity of others againſt us, that it will not pierce ſo deep with us, as with the proud unhumbled ſinner. The faith of pardon from heaven to ourſelves, will make us eaſy to forgive others. To think that God has forgiven us ten thouſand talents, will make us ready to forgive the hundred pence to our fellow-ſervants.

3. Ply your hearts with the believing thoughts of the beneficence of God to his enemies, and the love of Chriſt dying for his enemies to redeem them from wrath. As the darkneſs of the night, miſts and fogs, go away before the ſhining ſun, and wild beaſts of prey creep into their dens; ſo would all malice and hatred before this.

4. Conſider that even your enemies were made originally after God's image, Gen ix. 6. and they may be for all ye know the objects of everlaſting love; for whom ſpecial favour is ſecured by the eternal tranſaction. Love all men then, leſt if ye hate any, ye be found to pitch your hatred where God has pitched his free love, and ſo be found fighters againſt God.

5. As there are readily none, but they have ſomething deſirable about them; ſo fix ye upon that, and love them for it, as ye will love gold, though ye ſhould find it in a mire. Beware leſt the faults of others and their blemiſhes blind your eyes to their beauties and excellencies. It is unbecoming among thoſe who have no beauty without blemiſh themſelves.

6. Conſider them rather as objects of pity and compaſſion, than of hatred. And this ye will do, if ye conſider their enmity to you, more as ſin againſt God, than

as

as wrong to yourſelves, Col. iii. 25. God is Judge, and he will right all wrongs, and recompenſe every one according to his work.

7. *Laſtly*, Conſider the ſhortneſs of time, their and your own, Eccl. ix 6 We have no time to ſpend in theſe petty quarrels of this world. Death will make them all to die out. Our enemies are but enemies for a day; night comes, and they are removed. And we ourſelves go accordingly. Let us therefore be ready to go, in charity with all men, loving our enemies, that we may appear to be the children of God.

THE

THE

# Distinguishing Characters

OF

# TRUE BELIEVERS.

## VII. In relation to their Carriage in a Time of abounding Sin, and their Safety in a suffering Time *.

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### The Character of Zion's Mourners.

EZEKIEL ix. 4.

*And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.*

### The first Sermon on this Text.

DAYS of abounding sin usher in days of overflowing judgments. They are merry jovial days to the wicked and ungodly, who swim with the stream, and having the reins on their necks, give themselves the loose in the course of apostasy and irreligion: but they are heavy days to the serious godly, who dare not go along with the stream, but must oppose it, though their opposition cannot mend it, and therefore must issue in sighing and crying for it. But when the day of reckoning with the generation of God's wrath comes, the

* The two sermons on this subject, were preached on occasion of a congregational fast, at Ettrick, March 31. 1725.

the guise will turn, they shall get sorrow, and the seriously-godly shall rejoice.

Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon, to which he had been carried captive among those that were carried away several years before the completing of the captivity in the reign of Zedekiah. It would seem he was among those that were led captive in the time of Jehoiachin, 2 Kings xxiv. Those that are most dear to God may smart with the first in time of common calamity. Those that were left, went on in their wickedness; and therefore Ezekiel is raised up in Babylon to prophesy of that utter overthrow which fell out in Zedekiah's reign, wherein the temple and holy city were sacked, and the land was laid desolate.

In the preceding chapter, the Lord shews Ezekiel in a vision the horrible abominations that people were yet going on in, chap. viii. 3, *&c* and in this chapter he shews their terrible destruction by the Babylonians. This is represented by the destroying angels sent forth to kill: "They came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand," ver. 2. for their ruin was to be from Babylon.

In the text we have two things.

1. A party distinguishing themselves from others in a sinning time. And this they do by their exercise, not by any particular name of sect or party, but by their practice. Here we may observe,

(1.) The heavy exercise they have on their spirits at such a time. It is expressed by two words, both passive, importing that there is a load and a weight of grief and sorrow on them; which makes them sigh, when others laugh; oppresses their spirits, while others go lightly: and makes them cry The word rather signifies to groan, as a deadly wounded man, who is hardly able to cry. Jer. li 52. The sins of themselves and others pierce and wound their hearts, and they groan out their sorrows before the Lord, as under an evil which they are not able to remove. This word in the

the Hebrew, is in effect doubled, signifying, *that groan, that groan*; importing their fetching many a groan

(2.) The ground of this their heavy exercise, *the abominations done in the midst thereof.* Jerusalem was the holy city, but the holy city was polluted with abominable wickedness of many sorts, whereby the name of God was dishonoured by a people called by his name. This made them sigh and groan. Not that they knew all the abominations done in it: but what they knew, all of it was heavy to them, and God constructed that to be mourning for what they knew not.

2. Here is God's distinguishing that party from others in a suffering time, seeing to their safety when the men with the slaughter-weapons were to go through. And here consider,

(1.) Who gives the orders concerning them. *The Lord said.* God takes notice of the mourning remnant among them; he books their prayers and complaints, he bottles their tears, and so has a particular eye on them for their safety, when others are to be destroyed.

(2.) Who gets the orders about them. *He that was clothed with linen, having a writer's inkhorn by his side.* This is Jesus Christ, the Angel of the covenent, the Father's servant, the great High Priest, to whom the people of God owe their temporal as well as their eternal salvation He appears here in all his offices: he is among the destroying angels as a King; he is clothed in linen as a priest; he has a writer's inkhorn by his side as a prophet. Both he and they stand by the brazen altar, ver. 2. to shew that it was the profanation and slighting of the altar, a notable type of Christ, that was the great ground of the controversy with those who were to be destroyed; and that it was from thence, and not from their own sighs and cries, that the safety of the mourning party was to come. The destroyers were six; the Saviour was but one: to shew that the far greater part of that people would fall, as being devoted to destruction.

(3) The charge given concerning them. Whereof there are three parts.

[1.] To *go through the midst of Jerusalem*, the high streets. The mourners would be found there, by their carriage among others, testifying their dislike of the God-provoking abominations abounding among them. They were not ashamed to bear witness for God, and God will not be ashamed to own them.

[2] To *set a mark upon them.* It is vain to inquire particularly into the nature of this mark; for all here was visionary. It is to be a direction to the destroyers whom to pass by and not to meddle with. And this is to be done before the destroying angels get the word to fall on, to shew the special care that God has of his own in the time of the greatest confusion. The Babylonians would not notice this mark, but over-ruling Providence would carry them by the persons so marked.

[3] To set it *in their foreheads.* In the Egyptian destruction the mark was set on the door-posts, because their whole families were to be saved; but here it was to be set on their foreheads, because it was only designed for particular persons. Servants in the east had their master's name in their foreheads: and those who are sealed in their foreheads, God owns for his servants, while he treats the rest as enemies; compare Rev. vii. 3. The forehead is open to the view of all, which speaks the greater security of the marked ones, and that neither is God ashamed of them, nor ought they to be of him, even in the midst of dangers.

The words afford the two following doctrines, *viz.*

DOCT. I. *Times of abounding sin are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning to the serious godly, Zion's mourners.*

DOCT. II. *Those to whom sinning-times are heavy times, making them sigh and groan, shall be marked for safety (by Jesus Christ) in suffering times.*

I shall endeavour to explain and apply each of these doctrines in order.

DOCT.

DOCT. I. *Times of abounding sin are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning to the serious godly, Zion's mourners.*

In handling this doctrine, I shall,

I. Give the import of this exercise, and therein the character of Zion's mourners, to whom times of abounding sin are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning.

II. Shew why such times are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning to them.

III. Conclude with some improvement.

I. I am to give the import of this exercise, and therein the character of Zion's mourners, to whom times of abounding sin are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning.

1. Zion's mourners are godly persons, who in respect of their state have come out from the world lying in wickedness, and joined themselves to Jesus Christ, 1 John v. 19 It is not to be expected, that while men lie still there, they will be mourners for the wickedness done among them. They that never truly repented for their own sin to this day, may indeed talk and inveigh against the sins of others, but cannot be kindly mourners with Christ's mark. In a time of abounding sin, thy may bite and sting the sinners like serpents, as Satan reproving sin: but they can never mourn like doves over their abominations, Ezek. vii. 16.

2. Waking godly persons, not sleeping with the foolish virgins. Lot in Sodom was a mourner, and the ways of his neighbours were like thorns in his side, that kept him waking, 2 Pet. ii 8. One may have the root of the matter in him, and yet being asleep he neither sees nor hears, as he ought; and therefore cannot sigh and groan. And hence it comes to pass, that they may, with others, get a terrible awakening in the day of wrath; as sleeping Jonah did, when the storm arose.

3. Mourners for their own sins, Ezek. vii. 16.

*mourning every one for his iniquity.* Mourning for sin begins at home, if of the right stamp. The man first mourns for and groans under the weight of the body of sin, Rom vii. 24. and then under the weight of the sins of others; first over the sins of his own heart and life, and then over the sins of the land. This makes kindly mourning for the sins of the land; otherwise a man may be filled with anger and rage against them, as Jonah was against Nineveh, but not with Christian mourning.

4. Public-spirited persons, who are concerned to know how matters go in the generation wherein they live: how the interest of the gospel thrives, what regard is had to the law and honour of God, what case religion is in, whether Satan's kingdom is gaining or losing ground. For it is seeing and hearing that makes this sighing and groaning, as in the case of Lot, of whom it is said, 2 Pet ii 8. "That righteous man dwelling among the Sodomites, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds." Those who are concerned for nothing but their own particular affairs, and those whose concern is only as a matter of news, will neither of them be ranked among Zion's mourners; but those who are concerned to hear or see, that they may be affected.

5. Tender persons, careful to keep their own garments clean in a defiling time, and dare not go along with the course of the times, Rev. iii. 4. They that row with the stream of a declining generation, follow the guise of the time, and will rather follow a multitude to do evil than be singular; they are none of Zion's mourners, nor Christ's marked ones. But either they bear the devil's mark; or if they belong to God, they will get a mark of God's anger against their way set upon them, as Lot got for his sojourning in Sodom.

6. Zealous persons, opposing themselves to the current of abominations, as they have access, Psal. lxix. 9. They will be conscientious to do what they can in their stations to stem the tide, Psal. lxxv. 4. "Saying unto the fools, Deal not foolishly; and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn." They will look on them-

themſelves as called to be God's witneſſes, and to contend for him, Prov. xxviii. 4. They that find no concern they have with the piety or impiety of others, but are ready to ſay, "Am I my brother's keeper?" that find no obligation on them to ſupport the cauſe of God and religion in the world, can be none of Zion's mourners. The mark they bear is neutrality, which ranks them on the ſide of God's enemies, Matth. xii. 30.

7. *Laſtly*, Perſons affected at the heart for the ſins of the generation, to the making of them ſigh and groan on that account before the Lord, when no eye ſees but the all ſeeing One, Jer. xiii. 17. And this implies four things.

(1.) The abominations done, lie croſs to the grain and diſpoſition of their ſouls: otherwiſe they would not make them ſigh and groan. They have a real hatred of them, where-ever they appear, Pſal. cxxxix. 21. They would fain ſee the world reformed, and the nauſeous wickedneſs prevailing in it curbed; and they would heartily deſire to have religion and ſobriety get place.

(2.) They are a burden to their ſpirits, as vile and filthy things are to the ſenſes. They make them ſigh as oppreſſed with the weight of them, Pſal. lxix. 9. As they are a burden to the Spirit of God, ſo they are a burden to the ſpirits of the godly. Hence many times the wings of a dove, Pſal. lv. 6, 7. and a lodge in the wilderneſs, Jer. ix. 2. are deſirable: and it turns the world into a wilderneſs to them, making them long to be away from it.

(3.) They are wounds to their hearts, they groan like wounded men, Jer. xv. 18. Men know that, in other things, the ſeeing of matters go quite croſs to their inclinations, and the deſire and bent of their hearts, will be very wounding to them. No wonder then that the wicked courſe of a ſinful generation be wounding to a gracious heart.

(4.) *Laſtly*, Their grief vents itſelf in ſighs and groans, as native indications of the affection of their

hearts, as ſaith the apoſtle, 2 Cor. v..4. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened."

II. I proceed to ſhew why ſuch times are heavy times, times of ſighing and groaning to Zion's mourners.

1. Becauſe of the diſhonour they ſee done to God by theſe abominations, Pſal. lxix 9. Whoſe heart would not riſe to ſee his father that begat him affronted and treated with contempt without cauſe? And how can the hearts of the ſerious godly chuſe but be moved to ſee their fellow-worms contemn their heavenly Father, caſting diſhonour upon him, trampling under foot his ſacred laws, ſlighting his Son, and grieving and vexing his Holy Spirit? The relation betwixt God and the ſaints makes a ſympathy, that what is done to the one is reſented as done to the other.

2 Becauſe of the wounds they ſee given to religion and the intereſt of Chriſt by theſe abominations, and the advantage they ſee accruing to the intereſt of the devil and his kingdom thereby, Rom ii. 24 It is long ſince Michael and the dragon took the field one againſt another. The war is not yet ended, nor will be till the end of the world. Both armies are in the field, and the ſerious godly are concerned for the victory to fall to Chriſt's ſide; and therefore they take notice how the battle proceeds. And as the devil and his followers rage, when religion gets ground; no wonder the ſaints ſigh and groan when it is otherwiſe. So that from the prevailing of abominations two arrows fly into a gracious heart.

(1.) An arrow of grief for the loſs on Chriſt's ſide. Such abominations are done, and behold thereby the glory of the King of ſaints is darkened, the effect of his word of the goſpel is marred, and a ſoul, perhaps ſeveral ſouls, are loſt by it together, Eccl. ix. *ult.* "One ſinner deſtroyeth much good."

(2.) An arrow of grief for the gain on the devil's ſide. So many abominations as are done in the midſt of

of a land, so many trophies are set up, as signs of Satan's victory over the kingdom of Christ. And that cannot but be moving to those whose hopes are all bound up in the kingdom of Christ, and the destruction of Satan's kingdom: though it is natural enough for those on Satan's side to rejoice.

3. Because of the fearful risk they see the sinners themselves run by these their abominations, Ps. cxix 53: "Horror hath taken hold upon me, (says David) because of the wicked that forsake thy law." When Christ saw what a risk Jerusalem was running blindly, he wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes," Luke xix. 41, 42. The eyes of the serious godly are open, and they see the hazard of a blinded generation, which they do not themselves. They see them running on the sword-point of vengeance, making haste to the pit, and will not be stayed; heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, and rushing to their eternal ruin. No wonder that knowing the terror of the Lord by their experience, and the preciousness of a soul, they sigh and groan to see souls so thrown away for a thing of nought.

4 Because of the contagion to others they see ready to spread from these abominations, Matth xviii. 7. Eccl. ix. *ult.* Every one of them is an opening of the bottomless pit, by the steam of which many may be infected, and drop down into the same snare of the devil. O! the dismal consequences of the abominations done at first, may be, by one sinner, as a little cloud like a man's hand, and may in time as it were darken the whole heavens. Men by one abomination may strike up a spring of abominations, that may run long after they are dead and rotten in their graves, as Jeroboam did. And the prospect of this occasions sighing and groaning to the serious godly.

5. Because of the judgments of God which they see may be brought upon those yet unborn, by reason of

of these abominations. Hence says the prophet, Hos. ix. 13. 14 "Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer Give them, O Lord: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts. Many a man entails a curse on his family by his abominations; as appears by breaking the second commandment, by reason of which the Lord visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, Exod. xx. 5 And the controversy may be pursued for his cause when he is in his grave. And if a stop be not put by repentance and reformation to the abominations and apostasies of this day, they will undoubtedly smart under them who are not yet born into the world: and the generation to come will have cause to pronounce a wo on this going before them, Matth. xxiii. 35, 36.

6. Because of the Lord's displeasure with the generation for these abominations, Jer xv. 1. It is the joy of the serious godly, to see the tokens of God's good pleasure with the generation wherein their lot is cast, that the Lord will honour them, and take pleasure to dwell among them. But abounding abominations turn matters quite another way. If temporal strokes are kept off, they are left to pine away under spiritual plagues; God is provoked to depart, to withdraw his presence from his ordinances, and they are left to lament after the Lord The glory departs by degrees, and who knows where it may end, if it may not go the length of removing the candlestick, as the Lord threatened he would do to the church of Ephesus, Rev ii 5.

7. *Lastly*, Because of the common calamity which they see these abounding abominations may involve themselves and the whole land in The serious godly are sensible that with them also are sins against the Lord, and that God may justly proceed against them because of their iniquities. When then they see the cup of a land's iniquity fast filling by many hands, they have reason to be afraid of seeing it filled to the brim, and that it

it may run over even in their time. And however others may make a jeſt of the threatening of land-overflowing judgements, they dare not do it, Hab. iii. 16. And therefore the awful proſpect of the day of the Lord's anger againſt the generation of his wrath, makes them ſigh and groan.

I ſhall conclude at preſent with a ſhort word of improvement.

O ſirs! ſhew yourſelves ſerious godly, by mourning over, and ſighing and groaning for the abominations done in the midſt of the land. Turn from the God-provoking courſes of this day, and go not in the way of the multitude, as ye would not periſh with them; but labour to keep your garments undefiled, by ſtanding at a diſtance from the abominations of the time; ſet yourſelves in oppoſition to them, and mourn over the diſhonours ye ſee and hear done to the holy name of God, as ever ye would have the mark of ſafety ſet on your foreheads.

The caſe of the generation affords much matter of mourning, if ye conſider,

1. From whence we are fallen. The time was when the land was ſolemnly married to the Lord by covenant for reformation, and the Lord put a particular honour on Scotland by his preſence in ordinances. But now reformation is out of ſight, and matters are ſtill going from evil to worſe; ſo that if the Lord's hand do not interpoſe, it is hard to ſay where we will ſtop.

2. The unſucceſsfulneſs of the goſpel. There is little conviction, and leſs converſion, by the preaching of the word. Moſt part of the generation are proof againſt warnings from providences and ordinances. Whatever light there may be, there is little heat.

3. The abounding of groſs ſcandalous immoralities in the light of the goſpel, the ſacred name of God rent by horrid imprecations and blaſphemies, his ſabbaths profaned, murder, adultery, theft, perjury, and covetouſneſs prevailing; while errors ſubverſive of the foun-

dation

dation of Christianity, such as Arian, Socinian, and Arminian tenets, are vented, the purity of the doctrine of the gospel darkened, and put into an ill name, as if it was downright Antinomianism *.

4 Universality of the apostasy, a growing untenderness among all sorts, whereby causes of sorrow are multiplied among ministers and professors, among the young and aged; many pulling off their mask of religion, and throwing it by; and from the company of professors, communicants going over to the camp of the profane.

5. The incorrigibleness in it. A brow of brass, refusing to be ashamed, is added to all the defection that has taken place. People will not be reproved and convinced, but wilfully with a high hand go on in their sin. So that sighing and groaning is almost all that is left to do, for contending and striving are to little purpose.

6. *Lastly*, From all which there is plain evidence of fearful judgements abiding the generation, so much the more terrible as, after many deliverances there is a growing of the apostasy, and new deliverances do but make way to new steps farther forward in it. And national fasting and humiliation are grown out of use, but so far as they are called for by those who neither know nor can be supposed to know the state of this church and land with respect to these things †.

ADVICE

* It was at this time that Arianism and Socinianism were rampant in England, that Professor Simson at Glasgow broached Arianism under modern refinements, and that the preaching of pure apostolical doctrine was by some in the church branded with the name of Antinomianism.

† This relates to the church's not appointing fasts without the state, whose province it is to specify the causes of a religious fast. A neglect which there is still too much ground to complain of.

# ADVICE to Zion's Mourners.

## EZEKIEL ix. 4.

*And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.*

### The second Sermon on this Text.

AFter a particular explication of these words, I observed, "That times of abounding sin are heavy times, times of sighing and groaning to the serious godly, Zion's mourners." Here I endeavoured to give the import of this exercise, and therein the character of Zion's mourners; and to shew why such times are heavy times to the people of that character. And I concluded with a short word of improvement. I shall now proceed further in the application.

USE I. of information and instruction. Are times of abounding sin heavy times, times of sighing and groaning, to the serious godly, Zion's mourners? then,

1. Our time is a time that may be heavy, and ought to be a sighing and groaning time, and would be so if we had a heart for the duty of the day, being a day wherein "the Lord of hosts is calling us to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth," Is. xxii. 12. Whither can one that is serious look, but he must see matter of mourning? We have had long peace, and a long tack of the gospel, and have gathered much dross, fitting the church or land for a furnace of wrath. Iniquity abounds, but mourners for it are rare.

2. This blots out of the number of the serious godly, Zion's mourners, several sorts of persons, that must be put in another class.

(1.) Those

(1.) Those who are so far from it, that by their profane and ungodly courses, of a piece with the rest of the abominations of the day, they afford cause of sighing and groaning to all the serious godly, that know them and their way. These by the text are of the number devoted to destruction; and assuredly they will find it so, if they turn not over a new leaf, and that sooner than they expect. Let them consider the case of the evil servant, Matth. xxiv. 48.—51 "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not ware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." There is a wo denounced against such which will not fall to the ground, Luke xvii. 1. "It is impossible but that offences will come; but wo unto him through whom they come." Sighing and groaning is the necessary duty of the Lord's followers; but sad will their reckoning be who give them cause for it, ver. 2. "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

(2.) Those who pride themselves in their abominations, Psal. x. 3. "The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." The consciences of men by nature are very untender, but by custom in sinning they come to be seared. Hence they arrive at sinning presumptuously, and with a high hand, and instead of being ashamed, glory in their wickedness. Under the law such were to be cut off, Numb. xv. 30. "But the soul that doth ought presumptously (whether he be born in the land, or a stranger) the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Compare Heb. x. 26, 27. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking

ing for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." These are to be mourned over. Hence says the weeping prophet, Jer. xiii. 17. "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears.

(3) Those who make a jest of the abominations of the day, having a certain pleasure in the hearing of them, and improving them to make themselves merry with them. These are fools in God's account, Prov. xiv. 9 for *fools make a mock at sin;* and the practice is one of those found among those who are given over to a reprobate mind, Rom. i. *ult.* "Who knowing the judgement of God, (that they which commit such things are worthy of death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." They must needs be of a disposition mighty contrary to the nature of God, and of his people, who rejoice at the abominable thing which God hates, and the serious godly sigh for.

(4) Those who shew no concern about them, but give up themselves to a detestable neutrality, being Gallio-like, caring for none of these things. If they touch them indeed in their particular interest, they are very sensible of them, and ready to cry out under them: but if they do them no harm, whatever dishonour they do to God, or reproach they bring on the profession of Christianity, that is none of their business. What is that to us? say they. See how they are characterized by Elihu, Job xxxv. 9. 10. "By reason of the multitude of oppressions, they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?" These are Christ's enemies, as not being his friends: for, says he, "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad," Matth. xii. 30. And they shall fare as these his enemies fare, Rev. iii. 16. "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

(5.) *Lastly*, Those who whatever concern they shew for the abominations of the time, yet are not really affected with them in the sight of God. Though they may spare some words against them before men, yet their consciences can witness they have no serious sighs and groans to spare for them in secret before the Lord, Jer. xiii. 17 forecited. Truly this is a matter that will not do with a flourish of words. God knows the heart: and as the heart is, so is the man.

USE II. of exhortation. Take a lift of the heavy case of this day and generation in respect of the abounding sin thereof, and sigh and groan on the account of it. Let it be your care to be found among the serious godly, Zion's mourners. And for this cause,

1. Awaken yourselves to a more close walk with God, from the observation of the abominations of the time, Rev. iii. 4. They that are not more than ordinary watchful in a declining time, can hardly miss to be stolen off their feet, Matth. xxiv. 12. "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." As then double guards are set where the hazard is greatest, so double diligence is requisite in such a time. Let the abounding sin of the time be like oil to the flame of your love to and zeal for God, to make it burn the more keenly, Psal. cxix 126, 127. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold."

2. Be ye more careful that ye partake not with them, but stand at a distance from all fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, Eph. v. 11. Many make it an argument for their doing so and so, because so many make no bones of it: but argue ye contrariwise, that since so many cast God's laws behind their back in such and such points, therefore ye must take the better heed ye be not carried away with the stream; and that ye must not give religion an untoward cast, when it has so many enemies. But hear Christ saying to you, as John vi 67. *Will ye also go away?* There

are

are many ways how in such a time people may draw in the contagion of the abominations of others: and therefore ye have the more need to take heed.

3. Awaken yourselves to a due concern for the public honour of the Lord Jesus, saying with David, Psal. lxix. 9. "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me." God is saying at such a time, *Who is on my side?* We have good reason to be on his side, and to account his honour dear to us, who counted not his precious blood too dear to shed for us. When the war was proclaimed by heaven against the earth, he made the peace, becoming Immanuel, God with us. And shall not our souls find themselves concerned to be with him, on his side, in earth's war against heaven?

4. Awaken yourselves to a due concern for the case of perishing souls, and a sinking land, Hab. iii. 16. If ever we knew any thing of the terror of the Lord, we are too easy that way; we have too little bowels of compassion, else we could not shift to take a lift of the heavy case. It is inexcusable negligence and indolence, to confine our care to our own case in such clamant circumstances. This was not David's practice, for when deeply affected with his own foul fall, he had the case of the church of God at heart, Psal li. 18. "Do good, (says he) in thy good pleasure, unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem."

5 Contribute your endeavours, in your stations, to your power, to stem the tide of wickedness. "Say (as David did) unto the fools, Deal not foolishly; and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn," Psal. lxxv. 4. Beware of giving countenance in the least to the abominations of the day; but discountenance them as ye have any regard to the souls of the sinners, and would not contribute to the hardening and ruining them; and as ye have any regard to your own souls, and would not involve them in the same.

6. Take serious thoughts of the heavy case in your private meditations, Jer. xiii. 17. forecited. Think

what a miserable pass the state of religion is brought to, by prevailing iniquity; how the kingdom of the devil thrives in the midst of Christ's territories, and what, according to the scriptures, and the ordinary method of providence, must be the end of these things.

7. *Lastly*, Carry the case along not only to your family prayers, but to your secret prayers, where ye can lay it before the Lord with greatest freedom. Let your eye affect your heart there in a special manner, and drop a tear for your own sins, and the sins of others. Yea, it wou'd be very necessary, that, for your own case, and the case of the day, ye would use some times of extraordinary prayer. If you would do so, sure your labour would not be in vain.

I shall give you the following motives to press you to take such a lift of the heavy case of the day.

1. A gracious spirit is a holy and public spirit; and a predominant selfishness, whereby people are set only to satisfy their own lusts, and their care is confined only to their own private interest, is a black mark of an irregenerate state, according to what the apostle says, 2 Tim iii. 2, 4. "Men shall be lovers of their own selves,—lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." Accordingly our Lord says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," Matth. xvi 24. Whoever can call God Father, their hearts desire and concern will be, that his kingdom come. Whoever is a child of the family of God, and has any interest in the privileges of it, must needs be concerned for its thriving, and for destroying the kingdom of the devil set up against it. Beware of Simon's selfishness, to whom the apostle Peter said, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God," Acts viii. 21.

2. Great is the dishonour done to God by the abominations of this day. God has been a kind and gracious God to Scotland, giving us the gospel, that has been hid from many greater nations: yet abominations prevail, as in a land of darkness. He has continued the gospel

goſpel long with us; but for all the pains he has beſtowed upon us, we are as a vineyard over-grown with thorns, the face thereof covered with nettles, and the ſtone-wall thereof broken down. "For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles, through us," Rom ii 24 He has given peace, and plenty of the good things of this life, and they are improved againſt him. The ſilver and the gold are his, the corn and the cattle, our health and ſtrength, and his debtors we are for every breathing: yet all theſe are ſacrificed to mens luſts, and are uſed in contempt of God and neglect of him, to the treading his laws under foot, deſpiſing of his goſpel, and ſlighting his ordinances. If there is any ſenſe of God's greatneſs, or of gratitude for ſo many ſignal bleſſings, we would ſigh and groan for all the abominations done in the midſt of us.

3. Great is the hazard that many a precious poor ſoul is in by means of theſe abominations, Rom. i. 18. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs." How is Satan at this day driving poor ſinners in ſhoals to deſtruction? Half an eye may ſee a black cloud of wrath hanging over many a head of thoſe wedded to ſome one abomination or other. They cannot ſigh and groan for themſelves; for either they do not ſee, and they will not ſee, nor believe their hazard, though it be told them; or elſe their luſts have ſo got the maſtery over them, that they muſt take their ſwing on all hazards, ſaying with thoſe, Jer ii. 25. "There is no hope No, for I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go." This may excite others to ſigh and cry.

4 Great is the hazard of the riſing generation from them; they are coming into a ſad world, in a faſt declining time. And what pitch the generation may be arrived at ere they come up, if a ſtrong hand do not interpoſe, who knows? The generation now on the ſtage is become worſe than their fathers. The wonders the Lord did for his people when they were in the iron

furnace, are by this time much worn out of knowledge: moſt of thoſe that were witneſſes thereto are gone, and a generation is riſen up that knew not Joſeph. The covenanted reformation of this church and land is dropping out of heart and head, by degrees: a religion that has no relation to Jeſus Chriſt and the Spirit of God, is like to take place: and the flood of immorality is like to riſe higher and higher. O ſirs! ſigh and groan for all the abominations of the day, for the ſake of the riſing generation, that they may not be infected therewith.

5. Great is the hazard of the judgements of God that the land is in by theſe abominations. An overflowing of abominations is a forerunner of an overflowing of national judgements. Hear what the mourning prophet ſays, Jer. v 3, 4. 5 9. "Thou haſt ſtricken them, but they have not grieved; thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refuſed to return. Therefore I ſaid, Surely theſe are poor, they are fooliſh: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgement of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will ſpeak unto them: for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgement of their God: but theſe have altogether broken the yoke, and burſt the bonds. Shall I not viſit for theſe things? ſaith the Lord: and ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?" And the longer national judgements are a-coming on, the heavier will they be when they do come. And whoſo conſiders ſeriouſly the ſtate of the land at this day, in reſpect of her abominations former and preſent, all lying together on our head, with the ſcripture threatenings againſt ſuch a generation, can hardly miſs fearing, that if God have thoughts of good towards the generations to come, a ſtroke is abiding this land, that as the bodies of ſome dead have been unjuſtly and diſhonourably uſed by the living, in pulling them out of their graves; ſo the carcaſes of many now living

living may yet come to lie as dung on the face of the ground, Jer. viii. 2. *

6. However many abominations there are that we know done in the land, there are many done no doubt that we know not. The former gives sufficient ground to sigh and groan; and the latter may add weight to that reason. When many abominations break out and are brought to light, as at this day, we may be sure that there are many besides that have never seen the sun. But these are all open to God, and are sinking weights on the places where they are done, and on the land. Compare Ezek. viii. and ix. And they will make them to vomit out the impenitent transgressors.

7. Our sins have had a hand in bringing matters to this pass, Tit. iii. 3.; and therefore we are the more concerned to take a list of the case. We have all mismanaged our mercies, misimproved our day of grace, and, by untenderness one way or other, provoked the Lord to go far from us, and to leave the generation to their swing to go from evil to worse. The conviction of this may press us to sigh and cry for all the abominations of the day: and if any refuse the conviction, be sure they will be made to take with it, will they will they, when God riseth up to plead his controversy.

8. If ye do not sigh and cry for the abominations of this day, ye cannot escape being involved in the guilt of them, and consequently in the punishment to be inflicted on account thereof. See the text and context. In this case silence gives consent; ye will be held as consenting to all the dishonour done to God by them: for inasmuch as ye do not sigh and cry for them, ye give them your tacit

* That the author's apprehensions relating to such a melancholy event were not without some foundation, will appear, if it is considered, that about one and twenty years after the date of these sermons, the carcases of many of those who were engaged in the unnatural rebellion in 1745, raised against King George II. headed by a Popish pretender, met with some such treatment as is here alluded to: and these were the heirs and successors of those who had so treated the bodies of some of the saints in a former period.

tacit approbation, Eph v. 11. So the abominations of others will be laid on your score, and yet never make their burden one whit the lighter. And see the doom of the unmarked ones, Ezek. ix 5, 6. "And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity. Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary." Say not then, What can we do? Here is what ye must do, *viz.* sigh and groan on account of these abominations.

9 There will never one sincere sigh and groan of yours upon that head be lost; God will take notice of every one of them. Hence the psalmist says, Psal. lvi. 8. "Put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?" See what notice was taken of a serious few, whose sorrow of heart for the abominations of the generation they lived in, made them to speak often one to another, Mal. iii. 16 "The Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." The all seeing eye that takes notice of the least pleasant look his enemies give to abominations done, as he did in the case of the Edomites envy to Israel, Obad. 12. will not overlook the sighs and groans of his friends on account of these abominations.

10 Sighing and groaning for abominations in a land, is fairer to put a stop to them than ye are aware of, one way or other. Those that sigh and groan for the abominations of others before the Lord, will in the event prove either their best friends or their most dangerous enemies. Prayers and tears are the weapons of the church, and never miss to have effect sooner or later. In a word, the sighs and groans of the people of God lie fair for recovering of transgressors from their abominations. Christ groaned, and Lazarus was raised. They lament after the Lord, and the Lord will regard his

his people's lamentations; and if that Spirit were poured out, we might expect good (Isa. lxvi. 8.) that way, namely, sinners to be turned from their abominations. But if it shou'd not have that happy effect, it would issue in providence shovelling presumptuous sinners out of the way, as it was in the case of Sodom, and so putting a stop to the current, 2 Pet. ii. 5, 6, 7. It is his people's appeal to the tribunal in heaven, which one may be sure will not lie undiscussed.

11. *Lastly*, Be sure it will turn to your private advantage, go what way it will. They that have a Christian concern for the sinful case of others, it will fare the better of it with their own. Hence David says Psal. xxxv. 13. "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer returned into mine own bosom." Thus ye will be amongst God's marked ones in the day of suffering, while now in the day of sinning taking your place amongst his sighing ones. This brings me to another doctrine, which I shall speedily discuss.

DOCT. II. Those to whom sinning times are heavy times, making them sigh and groan, shall be marked for safety (by Jesus Christ) in suffering times.

On this point, I shall,

I. Shew the import of Christ's marking his sighing and groaning people.

II. Give the reasons of his so marking them.

III. Deduce an inference or two

I. I am to shew the import of Christ's marking his sighing and groaning people. It imports,

1. His taking a particular notice of them, and their carriage in the sinning time, Rev. iii. 4. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." They are his hidden ones, and the great piece of their heavy exercise is secret. But never

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a ſigh or groan they utter but he knows it. However they be hid among a croud, none of them are miſſed or overlooked.

2. His owning them for his own, Mal. iii 17. "They ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, in that day when I make up my jewels." And he owns them,

1*ſt*, As his own and his Father's ſervants, Rev. vii 3. while others are obſerved by him to be ſerving their luſts, ſerving the times, and ſerving their own private worldly intereſt.

2*dly*, As his friends, thoſe on his ſide in the war, while others are his enemies, having neither the word nor the ſign.

3*dly*, As his treaſure to be kept and preſerved, while others are loſt. Though they be the world's outcaſts, they are his jewels, precious in his eſteem, Mal. iii. 17.

And this owning ſignified by the marking, has reſpect to,

(1) The time preſent wherein abominations abound, and God exerciſeth patience, and they are left to ſigh and groan, and are apt to think they are forgot.

(2.) The ſuffering time coming; then he will own them, Mal. iii. 18 "Then ſhall ye return and diſcern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not." When the Lord's anger is going out in a flame, ye then he will look on them with a pleaſed countenance as own.

(3.) The time betwixt and the ſuffering time. For the mark once ſet on, is never loſt. Though they have a heavy time to go through, he will own them as his.

3. His ſecuring of them, come what will. They ſhall be ſafe, as God's own people marked for ſafety.

Concerning this we may obſerve in general, that ſafety from trouble is ſometimes the lot of God's mourners. Noah ſighed in a ſinning time, and God made him ſafe in a ſuffering time. There was an ark provided for him and his family, when the deluge came

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and swept away the whole race of men. God can provide a hiding place to his people when the world is involved in the utmost chaos of confusion and disorder. If we look to the providence of God, there will be found no random shots in the world. In a shower of bullets, there is none that can hit but where providence has marked its destination, Psal. xci. 7. " A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee."

Frequently there is a mitigation of their trouble, when it befals them. Though they drink of the cup, it shall be of the brim, not of the bottom or dreggy part. The rod shall be to them the rod of a man, a weak man, that lays on but a slender stroke.

And they shall be safe from the sting of trouble. They will have ease within, though trouble without, Hab. iii. 16. When others are tossed with fears without and terror within, and the guilty conscience is sounding an alarm within their sinful breasts, they shall have a feast in the sense of the Lord's goodness, at least in dependence on the promise. More particularly, this securing has a view,

*1st*, To public calamities in time. He will either (1.) Take them out of harm's way, before it come, as he did good king Josiah. Or, (2.) He will preserve them when it comes, as he did Lot from the destruction that overwhelmed Sodom and Gomorrah, and Jeremiah from being carried away captive to Babylon. Or, (3.) Whatever their share in the public troubles be, they shall be happy in the divine favour, under the covert of the covenant of grace, which is a covenant of peace to all who have taken hold of it. Thus it fared with Jeremiah, chap. xv. 11. " The Lord said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant, verily I will cause the enemy to intreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction." Josiah got a promise of dying in peace, 2 Kings xxii. 20. but he died in battle; yet the promise stood firm; for they die in in peace, die as they will, who die in a state of reconciliation

ciliation with God in Chriſt. They make a bleſſed exchange that get heaven for their hiding-place, go the times as they will.

2*dly*, To the great day, when wrath ſhall come to be poured out on the wicked world in full meaſure, Mal. iii. 17. "And they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will ſpare them as a man ſpareth his own ſon that ſerveth him" Not one drop of that wrath ſhall fall upon them; but they ſhall enter upon the poſſeſſion of all that bleſſedneſs and felicity which their Redeemer purchaſed for then at the price of his blood. Then will the joyful invitation be given them, "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matth. xxv. 34.

II. The reaſons of Chriſt's marking his ſighing and groaning people, are ſhortly theſe.

1. Becauſe they are his redeemed ones, being redeemed to God by his blood; and his Spirit in them ſhews the blood ſprinkled on them; ſo that no deſtruction can befal them.

2. Becauſe he loves them, having loved them with an everlaſting love, and drawn them to him with the bands of love and the cords of a man; and he will love them to the end. He ſympathizes with them in all their troubles, and will ſee to their comfort and ſafety.

3. His own honour is engaged for their preſervation and ſafety, that the world may ſee they ſerve a good Maſter, and that it is not in vain to row againſt the ſtream of a backſliding generation.

An inference or two ſhall conclude all.

1. Hence ſee that none ſhall be loſers at Chriſt's hands, however heavy hearts they get for his ſake. The tables will be turned, If. lxv. 13, 14. "Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, my ſervants ſhall eat, but ye ſhall be hungry: behold, my ſervants ſhall drink, but ye ſhall be thirſty: behold, my ſervants ſhall rejoice but ye ſhall be aſhamed: behold, my ſervants ſhall ſing for joy

joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

2. Here we may see that upright walking is sure walking in the worst of times. It is better to sigh and groan with the remnant, than rejoice with the multitude, in the time of the apostasy of a generation: for "it shall be well with the righteous, but ill with the wicked. They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy."

THE

# Distinguishing Characters

OF

# TRUE BELIEVERS.

VIII. In relation to their Friendship to CHRIST, and evidencing it, by doing whatsoever he commands them *.

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## Believers the Friends of CHRIST.

JOHN xv 14.

*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

IN these words we have two things.

1. A high and honourable privilege which some enjoy: they are *Christ's friends*. It is a relation, and a kindly and honourable one. Some are his enemies, and he will treat them as such, saying, "Those mine enemies

* These sermons were preached at Ettrick in June and July 1724.; and were begun June 21. the Lord's day immediately after the author's finishing his discourses on the covenant of grace.

mies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me," Luke xix. 27. Yea all are so by nature, Rom. viii. 7. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." But there is a party of mankind, brought into a state of friendship with him, whom he has done and will do the office of the best of friends to.

2. The character of those who enjoy that privilege. Many are pretenders to it; but few can make it out. Here is the badge they bear, the sign they are known by, *If ye do whatsoever I command you.* Those who bear it, Christ will own. This character Christ lays before his disciples, and all the visible church, (1.) That they may strive to answer it, as ever they would evidence to the world, and their own consciences, this relation. (2.) That they may at times examine themselves by it, and so clear their interest in him: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you"

The character is taken from practice. Friends must shew themselves friendly. This Christ's friends do by *doing whatsoever he commands them.* This doing is not the foundation of the friendship; that is faith applying Christ's reconciling blood, Rom. v. 10, 11.; but it is the fruit of the friendship, and therefore follows after it. It necessarily springs from it, and so manifests and makes it known, as the fruit doth the tree. So John viii. 31. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. Heb. iii. 14 We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." Thus obedience is not the condition upon which the privilege is obtained; but there is a necessary connection betwixt the privilege and the duty, which is all that the *if* here signifies: As if one should say, If there is smoak, there is fire; if there is good fruit, there is a good tree. Now observe here,

(1.) The character itself, universal obedience to the commands of Christ. Christ our Friend is our Lord and our God: he requires obedience of us: he must command,

mand, and we must obey, and that without exception, with unlimited obedience. The friendship betwixt Christ and his people reserves still the distance of Sovereign and subjects, Psal. xlv. 11. *He is thy Lord, and worship thou him.*

(2) The decision on this character, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." 1.) In that case, ye really are, and prove yourselves to be my friends. Fair words and a profession will not do it; but the practice of a friend will do it; and sincere obedience is the touchstone of friendship to Christ. 2.) Ye shall be owned to be real friends. Christ himself will take it as full evidence of your friendship to him.

The substance of this text may be summed up in the three following observations.

DOCT. I. It is the privilege of some of mankind sinners to be the friends of Christ.

DOCT II. It is the distinguishing character of the friends of Christ to do whatsoever he commands them.

DOCT. III They are the friends of Christ, who are in a gospel-sense universal in their obedience to his commands.

I shall handle each doctrine in order.

DOCT. I. It is the privilege of some of mankind sinners to be the friends of Christ.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What this privilege is in general.

II. How this friendship is made up.

III. What a privilege this is.

IV. Make application.

I. I am to shew what this privilege is in the general. It is a state of peace and oneness of interest with Jesus Christ. In these two it lies, as is evident from the common nature of friendship.

1. The friends of Christ, whereas naturally they were in a state of enmity with God, they are now in a state of peace with Christ, and God through Christ, Eph. ii. 14. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." All the children of Adam in their natural

ſtate, the eleſt not excepted, are in a ſtate of enmity with God. God bears a legal enmity againſt them, as the judge againſt the criminal whom he condemns, according to law: and they have a real enmity againſt him appeaing in their hearts, Rom viii. 7. and in their works Col i. 21 But now thoſe enjoying that privilege are now in a ſtate of peace and reconciliation with God. God's legal enmity againſt them is now removed; he condemns them no more, there being *no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. viii. 1. The countenance of the wrathful Judge is now laid by as to them. And their real enmity againſt him is removed too, out of their hearts and lives, that it reigns no more, Col. i. 21, 22. "You that were ſometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his fleſh through death, to preſent you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his ſight." So there is a cool of that moſt dangerous fever in their caſe.

2. Whereas they had divided intereſts as to heaven, now there is an unity of intereſts betwixt Chriſt and them, 1 John i. 3 "Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt." Many are at peace, who yet are not in a ſtate of friendſhip: ſo this is more than to be at peace with God ſimply. When Chriſt makes up the peace with ſinners, he enters into a friendſhip with them: there is an alliance, a covenant betwixt God and them, offenſive and defenſive: their intereſts are woven together from that moment: they have common friends and common enemies. Chriſt eſpouſes their intereſts, and they eſpouſe his; and they mutually purſue the intereſts of one another as a common intereſt.

II. The next head is, How this friendſhip is made up

1. The firſt ſpring and ſource of it is everlaſting free love Hence ſays the Lord to the prophet Jer. xxxi. 3. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlaſting love." It is as ancient in the deſign of it as from eternity. Some-

Sometimes one friend will say to another, When I saw you in such a place, or at such a time, there was something in you that I liked extremely, and from that time I was still desirous of a friendship with you. So Christ may say to his people, Since I saw you from eternity, lying in the corrupt ruined mass of mankind, I liked you, my delights were with the sons of men, Prov. viii 31.

2. The plot for compassing it was laid from eternity between the Father and the Son, Tit. i. 2. "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." The covenant of grace was made for bringing about this friendship: the method was there laid down, how, with the honour of the divine perfections, these enemies to God might be brought into a state of friendship; how they might be won into it.

3. The foundation of it was laid in the blood of Christ, in the fulness of time, Gal. iv. 4. 5. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might recieve the adoption of sons." The friendship with them, as little worth as they were, cou'd not be purchased, but by blood that might satisfy justice; for they were criminals under a sentence of death; Heb. ix. 22. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." So Christ died for them, and gave them the greatest demonstration of friendship for them; therefore says he, John xv. 13. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Hence we are often said to be redeemed by his blood.

4. It was moved to them in the gospel. 2 Cor v. 20. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. In the word of the gospel Christ courts the acquaintance of sinners, and proposes a strict friendship betwixt him and them. He sends his letters to them in the written word for that effect, which many times have remained unanswered, or got an ill answer.

He sends some of their own acquaintance, earthen vessels, to prevail with them to enter into this friendship, who many times labour in vain. But he continues his solicitations till he win them.

5. They are won to it by his own Spirit, Is xliv. 3, 5 "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring One shall say, I am the Lord's: and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." They will not be friends with him, till the Spirit take the work in hand. Their old friends, the devil, the world, and their lusts, have the ascendant so over them, that they cannot value Christ's friendship, till the Spirit open their eyes, display it to them, and change their minds and hearts: and he does it effectually when once he takes it in hand

6 By faith they go into the friendship with him, Eph. iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." So they come to him, and unite with him. And thus the bonds of the friendship are the Spirit on Christ's part, whereby he apprehends them, and faith on their part, whereby they lay hold on him So the friendship is made up inviolable and most strict, and Christ and they are in the bond of the same covenant; he as the head, and they as the members.

7. *Lastly*, The friendship is sealed by the sacraments, particularly that of his body and blood. It was an ancient custom to confirm a covenant of friendship with a feast, Gen xxxi. 54. And so the Lord has been confirming his friendship with his true friends among us of late, saying, as Cant. v 1. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends, drink yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" And O how fit is it to confirm the friendship! Can there be a greater instance of friendship than what is there! John xv. 13. fulfilled.

III. I go on to shew what a privilege this is. Men nor angels cannot fully express the value of it, for it is of infinite value, 1 Cor. ii 9. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." To raise your esteem of it, consider,

1. It is an honourable friendship. Many value themselves to little purpose on their great friends, while perhaps they and their friends both are enemies to God, and though they have greatness, want grace. But the believer may justly yea only value himself on his friends, 1 Cor i. *ult. He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* Their Friend is the Prince of the kings of the earth; and through him God is their friend They are allied to heaven: though they were come of the dunghill, the blood-royal of heaven runs in their veins.

2. It is a beneficial friendship. The friendship of many in the world is no more but an empty name: if a good word will serve their friend, they will give it him, but for any good deed, it is far from them, Jam. ii. 16. Yea the friendship of many is destructive; it serves for nothing but to be a snare, a trap, and a bond of iniquity, Jam. iv. 4 as betwixt Herod and Pilate But Christ's friendship is most beneficial: it is enriching and upmaking. The benefits of it who can tell? they will tell out for time and eternity; they are for the soul and for the body. One needs no more to make him happy: they are for prosperity, and for adversity.

3. It is an intimate friendship. There is no such close and intimate friendship betwixt any relations on earth, 1 Cor. vi. 17. *He that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit.* Many whose friendship is very valuable and beneficial, are very reserved even to their friends, allowing them little intimacy with them. But Christ communicates himself most intimately to his friends, lodges his greatest secrets with them, Psal. xxv. 14.; and they on the other hand pour out their hearts to him, with greater freedom than they can do to their nearest relations, where oft-times they find it necessary to be on the reserve.

4. It

4. It is an universal friendship, of universal influence. There is no friendship in the world, but it is limited to some particulars. There are some things to which mens friendship doth not extend, and in which they do not concern themselves with their friend. But Christ's friendship is of universal influence: from the greatest to the least of the concerns of his friends, he interests himself; he manages all about them in a friendly manner; from their eternal salvation, to the least hair falling from their head. And there is no case wherein one can come wrong to him for help.

5. It is a sure and lasting friendship. The friendships in the world are very uncertain. Sometimes the greatest friendship ends in great enmity, and often doth it degenerate into a coolness and indifferency: and rarely doth it fall out, but adversity slackeneth the bond, if not puts it loose for altogether. Hence proceed the complaints of the saints, Job xix. 14. "My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me." Psal. xxxviii. 11. "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore: and my kinsmen stand afar off" But Christ's friendship never dies out, John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." He may hide his love from his people, but never lifts it away from them. Hence is that comfortable passage, Is. xlix. 14, 15, 16 "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me." They may grieve his Spirit, and he may correct them with the rod: but the sharpest rod on their backs is a friendly one; the heaviest hand he lays on them, is still the hand of a friend, not of an enemy, Psal. lxxxix. 31.—34. And their adversity is so far from making his friendship cool toward them, that he bears a part with them in all their burdens; *in all their affliction he is afflicted*; and while he smites

smites with the one hand, he supports with the other. He afflicts not willingly; and he turns all their bed in their sickness.

A short word of improvement shall conclude this doctrine.

USE I. of information. Hence see,

1. The wonderful condescension of heaven to mankind-sinners, in that God was pleased to take any of them into friendship with him. The angels fell, but there was no offer of peace for them, no Saviour provided: but men may not only be at peace, but in friendship with God. We are rebels to God naturally, but may become friends through Christ.

2. They that are Christ's are most happy. They are provided with a stock, upon which they may travel through all difficulties, and make their way through all storms. Christ is their Friend, and he is both able and willing to provide for them. And they may travel comfortably through all, if they had faith in exercise to improve the friendship.

3. Jesus Christ is the best and most generous of masters. He makes all his servants friends; he treats them generously. He needs none of their service; none of their service can make him more happy: but he rewards their service nobly. O! who would not chuse to have such a friend? who would not serve such a liberal Master?

4. How friendless persons, who have none to regard them, may best bestow themselves, and get a friend, that will be better to them than all the world. Come to Christ, O friendless sinners! for the fatherless find mercy in him, even the outcasts of Israel, whom no body cares for. Come to him, and he will shew you the most distinguishing marks of friendship, more eminent than those that ever took place among men.

USE II. Of exhortation.

1. Let sinners seek this friendship. Christ, in the days of his flesh, was called *a friend of publicans and sinners:* and it was so far true, that he was and is ready

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to befriend sinners, to save them from their sins, but not to befriend them in their sins. Here is a privilege, and the worst of sinners may obtain it in the way of believing now, as well as many have done heretofore; witness Manasseh, Mary Magdalen, Paul, yea the whole of those that are now the redeemed from among men, sitting at his right hand in glory. But if ye continue in your state of enmity against him, ye will find at last that he will treat you as enemies: and as he is the best of friends, if you remain impenitent, he will be the most dreadful of enemies, and consign you to everlasting burnings Accept of his friendship therefore in time.

2 Ye that profess to be the friends of Christ, walk worthy of your privilege. Carry yourselves friendly towards him. Discover it by your respect to his commands, submission to his will in all things, and employing him in all your needs. And do not pretend to be his friends, while ye are regardless of keeping his way. Ye must distinguish yourselves from his pretended friends, by a sincere and universal obedience to whatsoever he says or enjoins in his word.

Doct. II It is the distinguishing character of the friends of Christ, to do whatsoever he commands them.

In handling this doctrine, I shall,

I. Inquire into this character of the friends of Christ, of doing whatsoever he commands them.

II. Shew why this is made their trying and distinguishing character.

III. Conclude with some practical improvement.

1. I shall inquire into this character of the friends of Christ, of doing whatsoever he commands them. I take it up in three things.

*First*, The friends of Christ are doers of his commands. They are all his servants, Luke vi. 46. Christ is their Lord and Lawgiver, and they do his commandments, Rev. xxii 14. His enemies may feign submission; they may say fair, and profess obedience to him: but his friends are doers of what he commands, in a holy life and practice, Jam. i. 22. It imports the following things.

1. Their lusts are not their domineering lords, to whom

whom they yield themselves to obey, Rom. vi 13, 14. If they have become Christ's friends, they are become enemies to their lusts, seeking the pleasing of Christ, and the destruction of their corrupt affections, saying, "O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name, Is xxvi. 13. They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts," Gal. v. 24. To *walk after one's own lusts*, is the character of *scoffers*, 2 Pet. iii. 3. Christ's friends have changed masters, and renounced their own will and corrupt affections.

2. The course of the world is not their rule, Eph. ii. 2. It has the force of a command on Christ's enemies: hence so frequent is the following a multitude to do evil, as if the commonness of a sin did licentiate it. But Christ's commands contradict the course of the world, and his friends will obey them over the belly of the torrent of the example of a godless generation, as Noah did, Gen. vi 9.

3. But as they look for salvation by him, it is the business of their life to please, serve, and glorify him, to *walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing*, Col i. 10. There are two works seriously plied by all Christ's friends. (1.) Salvation-work, that they may be saved from sin and wrath, and set beyond hazard of eternal ruin. This is done by faith. (2.) Their generation work, *serving their generation by the will of God*, as David did, Acts xiii. 36; that they may be useful for Christ in their day, to advance his honour and glory, "Shewing forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. This is done by obedience. In the former they look for their own safety, and in the latter for the honour of their Saviour. Christ's enemies either slight both, or if they seem to be concerned for the former, that is all, they have no due concern for the latter Why? because they have no regard to the honour of Christ, but to their own salvation. Here lies the mystery of the in-

inconsistent lives of many, who will pray like angels, and yet live like devils, as if there were no God to whom obedience were due. But Christ's friends pursue both and labour to serve and obey him, with the same earnestness as to be saved by him; and so are doers of his commands, as well as seekers of his salvation.

This is evident, if ye consider,

1*st*, That all Christ's friends are true believers in him, endued with saving faith, being *called, and chosen and faithful*, Rev. vii. 14. For by faith it is that one enters into the state of friendship with him. And all real believers are doers of Christ's commands, making it their business to obey him. For *faith without works is dead*, Jam. ii. 20. True faith is a working grace, *working by love*, Gal. v. 6. For it knits the soul to Christ, in whom is the fulness of the Spirit of holiness, Eph. iii. 17.; joins to him as to a husband, whose spouse is always fruitful, Rom. vii. 4.; as the true vine, making branches really united to it, bring forth fruit, John xv. 2. And so faith is virtually all good works. Hence Christ says, John vi. 29. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." And says the beloved disciple, 1 John iii. 23. "This is his Commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." And it receives Christ as a King, Lord, and Head, Psal. cx. 3.

2*dly*, The very end for which Christ purchased the friendship of heaven to any, and actually communicates it to them, is, that they might be doers of his commands. He laid down his life to purchase it for that cause. Hence says the apostle, Eph. v. 25, 26. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it: that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Tit. ii 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He brings them forth from among his and their enemies, for the same end, Luke. i 74 75. "That he would grant unto us, (said Zacharias) that we being delivered out of

of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him. all the days of our life." It was their misery while they were his enemies, that they neither would nor could do his commands: but in the day of their reconciliation he delivers them, knocks off their chains, and gives them both heart and hand in some measure for obedience.

3 Regardlessness of Christ's commands, and walking contrary to them, is the native product of the enmity of the heart against him. This is the very way how men evidence themselves enemies to him; for it is walking contraay to him. What is the reason that men cannot be subject to the holy law? Their enmity to God, a transcript of whose nature it is, Rom. viii. 7. They will be their own lords, and will not have Christ to reign over them: they are his enemies, Luke xix. 27. Men may pretend esteem of Christ, while they are regardless of his commands: but all such pretences are vain, Col. i. 21.

4*thly*, Where there is friendship there is love without dissimulation; and where there is love, there will be care to please the party beloved. Christ puts our love on this trial, John xiv. 15 *If ye love me*, says he, *keep my commandments*. And it is a most rational convincing trial What man among us would reckon one to love us, who were still walking contrary to us, grieving and vexing us with doing the things which we cannot endure? An unholy life is grieving to the Spirit of Christ; it is a smoke in his nostrils. How then can men pretend love or friendship to him, who are regardless of his holy laws? Whatever we call love to God, see what he calls so, 1 John v. 3. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

*Secondly*, The friends of Christ are doers of his commands, because they are his commands; as his will is the rule of their obedience, so it is the reason of it too: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." This is it that touches the hearts of his friends, and sets the wheels of their souls in motion in obedience:

That he commands it, that he requires it, Col iii. 17. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Christ's pretended friends sometimes do what he commands; but it is not from any regard to him, but to themselves. But real regard to Christ weighs with his friends. This imports, that,

1. They do his commands out of respect to his authority, Psal. cxix. 4. "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently." They perceive the impress of a divine authority on every command, and in compliance with that authority close with the duty enjoined. Hence where they cannot see any reason for a command, but that so is the will of Christ, they find even there sufficient ground for obedience: as being those who are not to dispute his command, but obey them; those to whom the will of the great Lawgiver is reason enough, Heb. xi. 8. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went."

2. They do his commands out of love to him. Hence we read of their "Work and labour of love, shewed toward his name," Heb. vi 10. Being saved by his blood, they give themselves to be ruled by his laws, and obey him from love and gratitude, *the love of Christ constraining them*, 2 Cor v. 14. Love lines the yoke of Christ to believers, and makes it sit easy on his friends, while it is very grievous to his enemies, John. v. 3. And the stronger faith is, the stronger is love; and the stronger that love to Christ is, the soul is the more ready for duty. His commands are acceptable to them, because they are his.

3. They do his commands as sons redeemed by his blood, not as bond-servants working for their own redemption; to please their Benefactor, not to render themselves accepted by their own obedience, Rom. viii. 15 Col. i. 10. Christ has brought in everlasting righteousness by his obedience, and put it on all his friends, whereby they stand accepted to God: and he commands them,

them, being righteous through faith, to be holy; and their souls say, as 2 Cor. vii 1. "Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." The mercy of God, and the love of Christ in dying for sinners, makes them to say, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

4 *Lastly*, They do his commands with heart and good-will, Eph. vi. 7. and that is the obedience only that is acceptable, Is lxiv. 5. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness." What is done for Christ's sake by his friends, will be done heartily; while the obedience of his pretended friends, his real enemies, is done against the grain. The cords of love draw swiftly and easily: and what backwardness to duty is found at any time, will be grievous to them.

It is evident there can be no acceptable obedience but what is done this way, done because Christ commands it: for if it have not a respect to his command, it may indeed contain the matter of obedience, but is destitute of the form and essence of godly obedience. Thus we see self-ends mar obedience, Matth. vi. 1. God knows the springs of our obedience, however close they lie within our breasts: and he will never acknowledge that to be obedience to him, that is not influenced by his authority, and has not him for its end.

*Thirdly*, The friends of Christ are doers of his commands universally and without exception, Psal. cxix 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Their obedience to Christ is unlimited as to an absolute Lord. His friends will prescribe no bounds of their obedience, but what he sets in his holy law. The obedience of hypocrites is ever defective here; they never want some secret reserve, which proves their ruin. Here then is the trial of Christ's true and pretended friends. It is certain, that there is no obedience on earth legally universal: but all the friends of Christ give him universal obedience in a gospel-sense. That is,

1. They are universal in their desire to do all his commands, saying, as Psal. cxix. 5. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" Perfect holiness is the desire of their souls, the aim and design which they have in view, though still they cannot as yet reach the mark. Every sin is a burden, and lies on them as an iron chain; and there is no lust they would not fain be quit of, Rom. vii. 24. Some sins lie nearer them than others, and they have greater difficulty to shake them off than others. Christ says, that the right eye must be plucked out, with thine own consent. Amen, says the friend of Christ. Hypocrites have always some lust which they desire not to part with; there is some part of Christ's yoke that they cannot away with. It is no more a burden to them than a gold chain about the neck, which one would be very loath to quit. They hate not every false way.

2. They are universal in respect of their endeavour to do all, to comply with every part of Christ's will; "I count not myself to have apprehended, (says Paul) but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," Phil. iii. 13, 14. Many please themselves with faint and lazy wishes to do all: but it is one thing to wish to do whatever Christ commands; and another to aim at it in suitable endeavours, to try one's strength at every known duty, and to put hand to work, though they cannot go cleverly through it. It is the ruin of many souls, that they put off themselves with lazy wishes but never once try in earnest the mortification of some known lust, or setting about some known duty. But Christ's friends are universal in their endeavours.

3. They are universal in respect of their willingness to know all that Christ commands, that they may do it, Psal. cxxxix. 23. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts." It is the voice of Christ's friends, "Lord, what wilt thou

thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6. And hence, where the command of Christ appears in any particular, they set themselves to receive and obey it. There is a great deal of deceit among men in this point. Most men stave off the discovery of those sins which they have no mind to part with; they strive to blind their consciences, that they may enjoy their sinful courses without disturbance: they lodge some lusts under disguise, willing to give them heart-room, but unwilling to know what they are.

The reasons why Christ's friends are universal in their obedience, are,

1. Because the grace of God inclines them to do what Christ commands, because he commands it, Psal. cxix. 4. forecited. And he that does one thing, because of the authority of Christ requiring it, will endeavour to do all; for the authority of God is equal in all, Jam ii. 11. The least coin that has the King's stamp on it, is current among the subjects as well as the greatest. The law of Christ is a chain of many links, and he that truly draws one to him, draws all: wherefore the Jewish rabbies say, "He that saith, I receive "the whole except one word only, despiseth the "commandment of God."

2. Because the whole law is written on their hearts in regeneration, and not scraps of it here and there, Heb. viii. 10. The new nature is suited to whatever Christ commands, because it is his own image drawn on the soul: it answers the law as the wax does the seal. Hence it is called *a new man, the new creature*, wherein all things are become new; and there is a perfection of parts, though not of degrees.

3. Because Christ hath the chief room in their hearts beyond all competitors. His interest with his friends weighs down all other interests, Luke xiv. 26. The world and cursed self have the predominant interest in the hearts of most men: hence Christ's commands must give place to theirs, and religion and conscience must lacquey at the foot of their desire to please men, their

covetousness, pride, and passion. But in the hearts of his friends all other sheaves must bow to his, and so the commands of others must give place to the commands of Christ.

4 Because he is jealous, and every the least command of his slighted is displeasing to him, Matth. v. 19. And a tender conscience will beware of displeasing him. Many a time God's people find in their experience the danger of tampering with some bosom idol It provokes him to depart, till they return and acknowledge their sin, Psal. lxvi. 18 Therefore says the spouse, Cant iii. 5. "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awake my love, till he please"

5 *Lastly*, Because their hearts are reconciled to the whole law, and every part of it. Their practical judgement approves it as good in itself, and good for them too, Psal. cxix 128 "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right." And hence there is a sincere endeavour to conform to it in all the parts thereof. There is a transcript of God's image in it, which the gracious soul longs for the drawing of upon it; so every command as a lineament of that image must be precious to them. Thus the character is established.

II. The next head is to shew, why this is made the trying and distinguishing character of the friends of Christ.

1. Because this hits the point in which the sincere and hypocrites differ, whether they be gross or close hypocrites. Look on both in their profession of love and friendship to Christ, and the hypocrite will vie with the sincere in it. The foolish virgins have lamps as well as the wise; the foolish man's building may be as high as the wise builder's is; the one wears the external badge of the Christian name, and of the sacraments, as well as the other But follow them to their practice, and there they part.

The gross hypocrite has the name of a Christian, but nothing of the life and practice of one. He will call

call Christ *Lord, Lord*, but makes no conscience of *doing the things that he saith.* He will cry, *The temple of the Lord*, and yet will *steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely*, Jer. vii. 8, 9. His profession is sacred, but his practice is profane. He will own Christ for his Lord, but in the mean time makes no bones of trampling his holy commandments under foot. The sincere soul dare not do this: since he abides in Christ, he must endeavour to walk as he also walked. He must be obedient to his Lord, Head, and King.

The close hypocrite, who does indeed many things which Christ commands, so that the world cannot determine him to be insincere; yet he never does all in known duty; his obedience is always wanting in some material part; and what he does, he doth not because of the regard he has to the will of Christ, but the regard he has to himself. Whereas the sincere aims at and endeavours compliance with the whole will of God, and that because it is his will, Acts xiii. 22.

2. Because the reality of friendship to Christ does without controversy appear here. Solomon observes, Prov. xxvi. 23. "Burning lips, and a wicked, are like a potsherd covered with silver dross." Will any man reckon one his friend, because he speaks him fair; while yet he is ever injuring him egregiously, traducing his name, and venting mischief against him? No; a man will look upon such an one as a notorious dissembler, and worse than a professed enemy. So says the Lord, "Shew your faith by your works. If ye love me, keep my commandments. Love not in word only, but in deed."

3. Because where Christ's friendship to a person takes effect, it certainly has this effect, Eph. v. 25, 26. How does it appear that Christ died for such a person, that he has justified him, &c.? If that man be not holy in his life, it cannot appear; if he be, it appears by his sanctification, Tit. ii. 14. For that was the end of the friendship, to bring back the sinner to obedience.

4. Because though the free grace of God tends to holiness, Tit. ii. 11, 12. yet there is a disposition in the

the children of men to turn it to licentiousness, Jude 4. Therefore the apostle cautions the Galatians, chap. v 13. "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Wherefore our Lord puts the trial of faith on good works, and of his friendship on universal obedience to his commands; that men may not by their unholy lives joined to a holy profession, make Christ the minister of sin, and deceive and destroy their own souls.

I shall now make some application of this doctrine.

USE 1. of information. This shews us,

1 What the life of a Christian is. It is a life of doing whatsoever Christ commands. And so it is,

(1.) A doing life, an active not an idle life. Hence is that exhortation, Phil. ii. 12. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" and that, Rev. xiv. 13. where we are told the saints at death "rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." And they have so much to do, the commandment being exceeding broad, Psal. cxix. 96. that they have no time to be idle. Christ went about doing good, and Christians must imitate him therein. God has set every one their work and post, and they must be busy in the work of their general and particular vocation.

(2.) A well doing life. Many are busy enough doing mischief: but the Christian's life is a life of doing good, for God's honour, and their own and their neighbour's good. Many do what is good in the matter, but they do it not well. The Christian's life is a life of doing good, from a good principle, to a good end, for a good reason, and in a good manner, 1 Tim. i. 5.

(3.) A watchful life, 1 Cor xvi. 13. *Watch ye*, says the apostle. One will never do whatsoever Christ commands without watchfulness. A loose careless life will never make it. If one do not watch, they will let the season of some duties slip; they will go contrary to his commands.

(4.) A

(4) A resolute life. Eph. vi 15. It is not possible but that, in such an evil world, the Christian must have sometimes the trial of advices and commands laid on him, contrary to the commands of Christ. But he must be precise in his adherence to the commands of Christ, say the contrary, or be displeased, who will. So there is need of resoluteness in this case, and need of a brow for a bargain. "For the fearful, and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," Rev. xxi 8.

2. That there are few friends of Christ in the world, his flock is *a little flock*, Luke xii. 32. It is little wonder that there are so many opposers of the interests of Christ, so many neutralists in his cause, and so many enemies to his people and way: for certainly his friends are very few in number; there are so few disposed to do whatsoever he commands them. If we examine the number of them by this character, it is but here one and there one will be found. The most part declare themselves none of his friends, but his haters, John xv. 18.

3. Sincere Christians may take comfort from this, whose conscience witnesseth their conscientious regard to all the commands of Christ, and their sincere endeavour to come up to the obedience of them all. They are, and are accounted of Christ his friends. Though in many things they offend, yet in every known duty they aim at obedience; and our Lord makes a difference betwixt weakness and wickedness. Hence David says, "I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God," Psal. xviii. 21. Though they want not their sin that easily besets them, yet their consciences witness that they are set against it as well as other sins: and the Lord will distinguish between voluntary yielding and involuntary, the reign and tyranny of sin, ver. 23. "I was also upright before him, (says the same holy man) and I kept myself from mine iniquity."

4. Let all such as make not conscience of universal obe-

obedience know, that their pretences to Christ's friendship are in vain. For says he, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke vi. 46. If your life be not in some measure suited to that character, ye do but decieve yourselves thinking ye have that privilege. If ye do not what Christ commands, but what the devil, the world, and your own passions command you, theirs you are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, not Christ's. Ye are self pleasers, men-pleasers, if the will of Christ is not the reason of your obedience, and does not influence you to universal obedience.

5. *Lastly*. The doctrine of free grace gives no encouragement to looseness of life: for there is no separating of faith and holiness. If ye be Christ's friends by faith, ye will be his faithful and tender servants in obedience. Though ye are not to gain heaven by works, yet having the right to it made over to you as his friends, you will work good works as the native fruit of the friendship.

USE II. of exhortation. Shew yourselves Christ's friends by doing whatsoever he commands you. And do ye what Christ commands you, if you would shew yourselves his friends,

1. In a time of general apostasy and backsliding from the ways of God, such as our time is, when the torrent of backsliding is running with a mighty force. It was the commendation of Noah, that he "was a just man and perfect in his generations, and walked with God," Gen. vi. 9. So did Lot in Sodom. It is a small thing to do what Christ commands, when credit, and reputation, and multitudes are on the side of religion: but to be best when others are worst, to be among the few names, is the trial of a friend of Christ, Rev. iii. 4. John vi 67 to regard his commands when the generation is trampling on them, that is friendship indeed, Psal xii. 7.

2. Even when it must be to your temporal loss, Heb. xi. 35. While Christ and the world go together, hypo-

hypocrites will follow him; while they may do the commands of Christ on free cost, they will do them: but if once their worldly interest interfere, there they will stop. They have a sort of love to Christ, but their love to their worldly interest is stronger, and so the latter swallows up the former. Hence persecution drives many away from Christ; and when there is no persecution, covetousness will supply its place. But shew your sincerity by following the commands of Christ over the belly of all losses that ye can meet with in the world, Luke xiv. 26.

3. When his hand is lying heavy on you by crosses and afflictions. The devil says that Job is an hypocrite, Job i. 9, 10.; but Job was regardful of God's commands even in affliction. It is easy swimming while the head is borne up; and to be for God while he appears to be for us in favourable dispensations, is not so hard. But to be tender of the authority of an afflicting God, to strive to please him in all things, doing and suffering, while he is afflicting, crossing, and chastising us, there is the trial of a friend of Christ, Job xxvii. 10. "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?"

4. When sin comes with a seen advantage in its hand, as in the case of Moses, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. When the poison is presented in a golden cup, and there is a seen advantage in sinning, it will readily make Christ's pretended friends lay by their mask, and trample on Christ's command, that they may reach the bait. So Judas betrays Christ when he could have thirty pieces of silver for it; and Demas embraced the present world, letting the world to come slip. But know ye, that at such a time Christ is taking a trial of your friendship; and therefore see to yourselves.

5. When the sin that most easily besets you comes in competition with your obedience to the commands of Christ, Psal. xviii. 23. When it and the command are in the balance, and the command weighs it down, it is a hopeful sign. Many who will bear very fair in

many

many instances, are quite undermined when this come to be their case. They could raise their regard to the command of Christ above many temptations, but there is one thing that ever spurns his authority, Mark x. 21.

6. When there is nothing to keep you back from sin, but pure regard to the command of Christ. Sometimes holy providence brings people into such circumstances for their trial. The temptation is attended with all advantages which the evil heart could wish, fair occasion, secrecy, and encouragement to it from every hand, but the hand of a holy God. So it was in Joseph's case, but he shewed himself a friend of Christ, saying, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Gen. xxxix. 9. Many temptations are resisted from some extrinsic considerations: but this is the trial of a friend of Christ.

7. When you are tempted to sin that has such a plausible name in the world, that ye can lose no credit by it, but rather be in hazard of risking your reputation by your making any bones of it. There are many such sins which the generation has stamped lawfulness upon, and is ready to expose as needless scrupulosity the abstaining therefrom. But conform not ye to the world, Rom. xii. 2. Tenderness has often been nicknamed precisèness, and God's people been wondered at, "thinking it strange that they run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of them," 1 Pet. iv. 4. But if all the world should approve the practice, and Christ disapprove it, Christ's friends must stand off from it, "walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise," Eph. v. 15.

8. When the tempter appears resolute in the temptation, and being repulsed renews the attack. Shew your regard to Christ's command by a resolute and continued resistance. So Paul did, 2 Cor. xii 8. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." They may have some respect to Christ's command at first, who being importuned will yield

yield the cause at length, like Pilate, who condemned Christ over the belly of his conscience.

9 *Lastly*, When Christ is calling to some more than ordinary hard task Sometimes the Lord takes a trial of men this way, calling them to some unordinary piece of obedience. So he did with Abraham, as to the command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. And so he did with the rich young man, as to the order to sell all that he had, and give to the poor, Mark x. 21, 22.

I shall offer you the following motives to shew yourselves Christ's friends by doing whatsoever he commands you, without reserve or exception.

1. Because all his commands are the commands of an absolute Lord, to whom we owe obedience in all things, Exod. xx. 2. *I am the Lord thy God*. We were created by him, are preserved by him; whatever being we have, or means of life and being, all is from him, Acts xvii. 28. Therefore he has an unlimited power over us, and we ought to live, move, and be for him, in all things. And any command of his neglected is a withdrawing of due obedience from him.

2. All his commands are just, righteous, and reasonable, Psal. cxix. 128. Men sometimes demand unjust and unreasonable things of their subjects; but all his ways are judgment, and his commands just, Rom. vii. 12. He has linked together our duty and true interest: so that he requires nothing of us, but what is for our good. And we cannot trample on any of his commands, but we act against our real interest; and so sinning against God, we sin also against our own souls, Prov. viii. 36. The interests of mens souls, and of their lusts, are different indeed. God's commands do cross the latter, but never the former.

3. We are all of us under covenant-engagements to do whatsoever he commands us. We have all avouched him for our Lord, Luke vi. 46. Many of us have of late taken on these engagements at his table; let us not forget them. Several who have fallen off from renew-

ing their engagements in that manner, in some former years have taken them solemnly on: let such remember, that their disusing of that ordinance doe not loose their engagements taken on formerly, but they lie on them before the Lord. And those who never yet sat down at the Lord's table, are yet baptized: and so are firmly engaged to him, as their Lord and Master, to do whatsoever he commands them, Gal iii. 27. So that if we do not, we must expect to be treated as rebels, apostates covenant breakers, as men that cast off the yoke of Christ, after they have professed to take it on.

4 Christ has been the best friend ever mankind had: he has done for sinners what no creature whatsoever ever did or could have done for them, John xv. 13. Rom v 8. Look ye for any share in the benefit of his death; and will ye refuse to obey him? Remember that word, Heb. v. 9 "Being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." If ever he was a Priest for you he will surely be your King: if ye be saved by his blood, ye will surely be sanctified by his Spirit.

5 He refused nothing that was laid upon him for the behoof of poor sinners; but whatever was the will of his Father for that effect, he did readily comply with it, Psal. xl 7, 8. "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." The hardest of commands were laid on him, and the hardest suffering put upon him: but the cup given him to drink he would by no means refuse What are we then that we should make any exceptions in our obedience to him?

6 If ye do not whatsoever he commands you, but still make some exception of some things ye cannot comply with, ye will lose that which ye do: the neglected known duty will spoil all the duties ye perform; the indulged known sin will mar all the other pieces of your reformation. It will be like poison to a cup of wine. (1.) It will mar it as to acceptance with God,

Jam.

Jam ii. 10. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." No partial obedience will ever be acceptable to God He must have the whole man, the whole heart engaged in his service, or he will accept none at your hand. Hence says the psalmist, Psal. lxvi. 18 "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (2.) It mar it as to the eternal reward, 2 John 8. Partial services may indeed receive a temporal reward, like Jehu's half-reformation: but then there is no more got thereby.

7. It is necessary to evidence your sincerity, Psal. cxix 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments," says David. Universal obedience in a gospel-sense is the badge Christ's real friends. Therefore labour to know your whole duty, and readily comply with every duty ye know. While ye thus supply what is lacking in your conversation, filling up all the gaps ye can discern therein, ye will discover yourselves the true friends of Christ, and you will have much comfort and peace in it. 2 Cor. i. 12. while ye leave nothing unattempted, wherewith your heart may reproach you. This will be a mean of confidence before the Lord to you. 1 John iii. 21. "If our heart condemn us not, (says the apostle) then have we confidence towards God." But if ye still retain some sweet morsel under the tongue, some secret exception against some part of Christ's yoke, ye will declare yourselves none of Christ's friends, but his real haters and enemies. And it will prove these six sad things against you.

(1.) That ye are yet in the black state of nature, unregenerate: for, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away, behold, all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. For the new creature from the time of its birth is perfect in parts, though not in degrees It is furnished with all its integral parts, though none of them are come to their full growth. There is indeed something lacking in every

part of the new man, but no part altogether lacking. And if ye be not born again, ye have no right to the inheritance, John iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God."

(2.) That whatever your attainments are, ye are but hypocrites, Pſal. xviii. 23. For ſincere Chriſtians are univerſal in their obedience, Pſal. cxix. 6. She was the falſe mother who would have had the child divided; and ſhe is an adultereſs that takes one inſtead of her huſband. And they are falſe to Chriſt who indulge themſelves in one known ſin, whatever lengths they may otherwiſe go. And hypocrites are in a ſad caſe, as you may ſee, Rev. iii. 15, 16. Matth. xxiv. 51.

(3.) That ye have not the Spirit of Chriſt; for where-ever he dwells, he brings forth the fruits of holineſs, and theſe are *in all goodneſs*, Eph. v. 9. Where then there is only ſome and not all goodneſs, there the Spirit is not: and that cuts off all your pretenſions to Chriſt, Rom. viii 9, "If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his."

(4.) That ye are not truly mortified to any thing, but under the reigning power of ſin; for your right-eye ſins remain untouched. Whereas, "They that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts," Gal v. 24. True mortification is univerſal; while one member is alive, the body is not dead: death removes life from every part of the body, and ſo does mortification with the body of ſin and death. One luſt on the throne is ſufficient to keep Chriſt out of it. And this binds over the whole man to hell-fire, Matth. v. 29.

(5.) That you do not one thing right, Iſ. i. 11. to 15. For it is hereby evident that you do nothing out of love to God, or reſpect to his authority: becauſe if it were ſo, ye would regard his authority in that thing as well as in other things, and true love to God would not allow the placing any thing in his room.

(6.) *Laſtly*, That ye are deſpiſers of the whole law, and of the whole yoke of Chriſt, Jam. ii. 10, 11. "For

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery; said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." As the breaking of one link is the breaking of the chain; so he that despises the authority of God in one command, despises it in all. What can be expected then, but that ye are and will be treated as enemies of God? Luke xix 27.

8. *Lastly*, Consider the glorious privilege of those who do whatsoever Christ commands them. They are his friends and favourites. He was their friend from eternity. he is their friend in time, and he will be their friend for ever, when time is gone.

Now, if ye would walk up to this character,

1. Read the scripture much, and read it as the rule of your duty, as the book of your instructions: For, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii 16. 17. Some read the Bible as it were for mere reading's sake; some, that they may be masters of and able to talk of scripture-history: but few read it to the end they may know what is the will of Christ as to their walk, that they may frame their life according to it.

2. Let your heart lie open to the discoveries of the will of Christ either in the written or preached word. Beware of staving off convictions of sin and duty, of slighting discoveries of the mind of God in matters of your practice: but where the Lord makes light to shine, open your hearts to receive it, and be not of those that rebel against the light.

3. Keep the word before your eye, in the whole of your conversation, knowing that whatever ye are doing, the word binds you to do it after such a manner: and labour ye to conform to it, Psal cxix. 9 As one walking in the dark, fixes his eye on the candle carried be-

fore him, thereby to direct every step: so do ye "take heed unto the sure word of prophecy, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place," 2 Pet. i 19. Let not the world's good or ill opinion of a thing be what shall determine you, but what the Lord's word says of it, and let that determine you over the belly of all objections, Mark x. 15

4. Be watchful to observe the seasons of duty, Psal. i. 3. To every thing there is a time, and every thing is beautiful in its season: and if one miss the season, he misses the duty itself in many cases. Sometimes God puts opportunity of doing such a good thing in one's hand: if they let it slip, they may never have access to it again, Gal vi. 10.

5. Whatever ye are called to, set about it in faith, *doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus*, Col. iii. 17. Seeing your call from the word, apply yourself to it, in the faith of the promise of assistance, 2 Tim. ii. 1. Though it may seem an easy thing, venture not upon it but in faith of strength for it from the Lord: for oftimes when men are surest in their own conceit, they are really loosest. Though never so hard, your call being clear, go forward to it, and on in it in faith; and ye shall be carried through: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," says the apostle, Phil. iv. 13. And again says he, *When I am weak, then am I strong*, 2 Cor xii. 10.

6 Be frequent in the thoughts of the love of Christ, the shortness and uncertainty of your time, and in breathings after perfection. The believing thoughts of Christ's love will oil the wheels of the soul for the course of obedience The consideration of the shortness and uncertainty of your time will be a spur to diligence, and falling in with occasions of serving the Lord, and will shew that if your work be hard, it will not be of long continuance. And the breathing after perfection will natively lead you to be making progress.

7. Labour to get on resolution for God, and ward off the fear of man, Eph. vi. 15. Prov. xxix. 25

8. Learn

8. Learn to live above the world, to keep it under your feet, and not to set your heart on it, 1 Tim vi. 10.

9 *Lastly.* Observe the side where you are weakest, and there set double guards: and be peremptory for victory over the sin that most easily besets you; and to do what Christ commands in that part, Mat. v 29.

DOCT III *They are the friends of Christ, who are in a gospel-sense universal in their obedience to his commands.*

This is the pappy state, this is the honourable relation which they stand in, who are thus tender in their practice. I have already opened this practice; it remains only to open up the privilege of such, which I offer in the following particulars.

1. Friendship properly so called is mutual; it stands not upon one side only, but is competent to each of the parties who are in the bond of friendship. And Christ's sincere servants are in the bond and state of friendship with Christ, John xv. 15. *I have called you friends,* says he.

(1.) Christ is their friend, Cant v. *ult.* He is not only their Lord and Master, but he is their friend. He professes himself their friend, whoever be their haters and enemies; he does the part of a friend to them, and they have pitched on him as their friend, and may claim his friendship as their privilege, and improve it to all intents and purposes. This honour have all his saints.

(2.) They are Christ friends, James ii. 23. *Abraham was called the friend of God.* Most part of the world are enemies to Christ, and haters of him, for they will not be ruled by him, Luke xix 27. The greatest length they are brought to is to feign submission to him, retaining their hatred, Psal. lxxxi. 15 Only his sincere servants are his hearty friends, as saith the text. They are that part of mankind, who really are, and are owned by him to be his real friends.

2 In friendship there is a peculiar affection, regard, love, and esteem, Deut. xiii. 6 —*thy friend, which is as thine own soul.* And such there is between Christ and

and his ſincere ſervants, 1 Cor. vi. 17 *He that is joined unto the Lord, is one ſpirit.* They are truly one, in the ſtricteſt bonds of one ſpirit.

(1.) Chriſt has a peculiar affection and regard for them. They are his darlings, his *only ones* in the world, Cant. vi. 9 Though the world count them unworthy of a room among them, he bears them in his heart, Exod. xxviii. 29. Though the world hates them, he has a ſingular love to them, John xv. 9. He is very mindful of them, even when they think he has forgotten them, Iſ. xlix. 15, 16 He looks on them as his peculiar treaſure, Pſal. cxxxv. 4 1 Pet. ii 9; his jewels, Mal iii. 17.; and therefore he has a ſpecial concern for them in a time of common calamity, Ezek ix 4.; till Lot be in Zoar, Sodom could not be deſtroyed, Gen. xix. 22. Hence is that tender addreſs, Iſ xxvi 20. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee: hide thyſelf as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt."

(2.) They have a peculiar affection and regard for him, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? (ſays the Pſalmiſt) and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee." All perſons and things in the world are but loſs and dung to them in compariſon of Chriſt, Phil. iii 8. They have ſeen a glory in him darkening all created excellency; ſo that he is dearer to them than all the comforts of life, yea than life itſelf, Luke xiv 26.

3. In friendſhip there is a common intereſt of the parties; for a friend is as it were another ſelf. So is there betwixt Chriſt and his ſincere ſervants, 1 John i 3. "Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt."

(1.) Jeſus Chriſt eſpouſes their intereſt, and concerns himſelf in all their concerns, Acts ix 4. He takes part with them againſt all their enemies, and ſeconds them in all rencounters, whether with Satan, Luke xxii. 31, 32, with men, 2 Tim. iv. 17. or their own luſts.

lusts, 2 Cor. xii. 9. so that there is always more with them than against them. He sympathises with them in all their griefs and afflictions, Zech ii 8 Isa. lxiii. 9.

(2.) They espouse Christ's interests, and concern themselves in the matters of his glory: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," says David, Psal lxix 9. What wounds his honour, wounds their hearts: "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes: because they keep not thy law, Psal. cxix 136. They have a natural concern for the prosperity of his kingdom, and labour to take part with it against whosoever oppose it. So that even when their own private case lies heavy on them, the public interest of Christ does so too, as in David's case, Psal. li. 18.

4. In friendship there is a peculiar freedom and familiarity which the parties use one with another, which they use not towards others. And such there is betwixt Christ and his sincere servants. There was one in David's court, 2 Sam xv. 7. another in Solomon's, 1 Kings iv 5 who was the king's friend, as admitted to greater freedom with the king than the rest of the courtiers. Such are all Christ's sincere servants.

(1) Christ's treats them with great familiarity, the familiarity of a friend, John xv. 15. He visits them in their lowest condition, and speaks a word in season to them, when their nearest friends on earth can do them no service, Psal cxxxviii 3. Lam iii 57. He brings them sometimes very near him, Cant. i 4. and communicates his secrets to them, that are hid from the rest of the world, Psal. xxv 14.; shews them his glory, Is. xxxiii. 17.; opens the mystery of providence to them, and helps them to see love in the darkest dispensations, Psal cvii *ult.*; and sometimes gives them a sight of everlasting love, Jer xxxi 3.

(2.) They use great familiarity with him, Cant. vii 11. Whatever they need, and at whatsoever time, they go to him for it freely, Luke xi 5, 6. Their most loathsome sores they can lay out before him, and freely tell him all their mind, even what they cannot,

com-

communicate to any on earth, Eph. iii. 12. And if at any time it is otherwise, the fault lies in not improving the privilege of their friendship.

5 *Lastly*, In friendship there is mutual real friendliness in deeds of friendship, according to the circumstances of the parties, Prov. xviii. 24 "A man that hath friends, must shew himself friendly." Friendship animates one friend to do for another, as they are capable. And,

1*st*, Christ is very friendly to them The acts of his friendship towards his sincere servants who can sufficiently declare? Many a time he has found them in straits, wherein none but he could relieve them, and he has befriended them therein. and he will befriend them.

(1) He befriended them in the everlasting covenant, undertaking for them in it. When they lay with the rest of mankind in a lost helpless state, there being none in the whole creation able to act for them, he befriended them, took on their person, bound himself for them, to pay their debt of duty and punishment. So he became Surety for his ruined friends, Psal. xl. 7.

(2.) He befriended them in his life and death in the world. He was born holy for them, lived holy for them, and died for them on the cross, John xv. 13 Never was there such an act of friendship as this among men, one bearing the wrath of God in the room and stead of another. O how he loved them!

(3.) He befriended them in their conversion to God, Jer xxxi 3. When they lay dead in sin, he quickened them; when they were going away from God, he brought them back again; while they remained in the world lying in wickedness, he separated them for himself While the guilt of all their sins lay on them, he clothed them with his righteousness, and procured their justification by his blood; while their sins had dominion over them, he broke the yoke by his Spirit, &c.

(4.) He befriends them all their life long. On earth in all their necessities, whoever proves their ene-

enemy, he takes them by the hand, Psal. cxviii 6. And he befriends them in heaven, pleading and managing their cause there, 1 John ii. 1. They have a friend in court there.

(5.) He befriends them at death, when no other can do it, Psal xxiii 4 He takes the sting out of it, before it comes to them: he has another habitation provided for them, a better mansion, before they remove out of the body: and he sends his angels to carry their separate souls into Abraham's bosom O nonsuch friendship!

(6.) *Lastly*, He will befriend them at the judgement. He will raise up the bodies of his friends out of the dust by his Spirit: he will set them on his right hand, and adjudge them to the everlasting kingdom, as the blessed of his Father.

2*dly*, Christ's sincere servants are friendly to him. But how? Their goodness extends not to him; they have nothing to give him but of his own. But he reckons them friendly to him, in being friendly to his members, Matth xxv. and in a sincere obedience to all his commandments, as saith the text.

I shall conclude all with a very brief application.

USE I. of lamentation over the case of those who cannot be brought to a sincere endeavour to comply with whatsoever Christ commands them. How many are here who comply with very little that he commands them, but in the whole track of their conversation shew profane contempt of the commands of Christ? There are many who do many things, but spoil all, by the wordal exceptions they put in to some particular commands, which they can never be honestly engaged in the observance of. Some are swayed by their carnal interest, and they cannot do such a command of Christ's, for it crosses their worldly interest; others cannot do another command, for it lies cross to their honour and credit: and others cannot do another command, for it is contrary to their humour, &c.

Ah!

Ah! how do such stand in their own light, and deprive themselves of Christ's friendship by the way that they take! Their loss is inexpressible. Christ's friendship is what one cannot want, but he is ruined for time and eternity: and wherefore is it lost, but for a thing of nought?

USE II. of comfort and encouragement to the sincere servants of Christ, honestly addressing themselves to the obedience of all his commands without exception.

1. This may animate you to go on in universal obedience, to stick at nothing that Christ commands, but cordially to fall in with every known duty. Our Lord takes it as a sign and proof of friendship to him, and allows you to take it as an evidence of his friendship to you, Psal. cxix. 6

2 It may assure you of tenderness and compassion in that wherein ye come short Christ's friendship makes your pardon sure, 1 John ii. 1; it provides a mantle of love to cast over the infirmities of his people Numb. xxiii. 21. and takes the sincere will for the deed, 2 Cor. viii. 12.

3 This may determine you to pursue your duty whatever displeasure, ill-will, and hatred of men ye may incur for it, Heb. xi. 27. If men say in effect, If you do such a thing which Christ commands, we will reckon you enemies; what may balance that is, that Christ says, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

4. *Lastly*, It may help you to bear afflictions, that Christ is your friend. Nothing comes to you but through his hand, John v. 22. So whatever your case is, you are in a friend's hand, who sticketh closer than a brother.

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THE

# Distinguishing Characters

OF

# TRUE BELIEVERS.

## IX. In relation to their Work in this Life, and their Journey to the other World *.

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### The Nature and Necessity of the Christian's Work.

ECCLESIASTES ix 10.

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.*

AS no man had more access to know what might be made of this present life, than Solomon; so none gives us more mortifying accounts of it than he. He shews it to be short, uncertain, and mixed with a variety of ungrateful events. And thereupon he calls us to make the best use of it we may, and that it will bear. (1.) He will have us to take the comforts of life, in the favour of God, ver. 7, 8, 9. "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun." (2) To ply the busi-

* The author's manuscript bears, that the sermons on this subject were begun to be preached July 26. and ended Sept. 27. 1724. having during that time also preached from other texts.

buſineſs of life while life laſts. So there are comforts to be had in life, and there is buſineſs to be done in it. Happy are they who taking the one, do the other. "Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," &c.

In theſe words we have two things.

1. An exhortation to ply the buſineſs of life, while life laſts No man was born to be idle, nor ſent into the world to ſleep or dream away a lifetime, but to be doing, and doing good. And here is,

(1.) The buſineſs of life, "Whatſoever thy hand ſhall find to do with thy might, Heb. The work we have to do is a work of many pieces, as much as to fill up every minute of our ſhort time: and no part of it is to be neglected, *Whatſoever thy hand ſhall find to do*. It is detemined two ways, what we have to do. (1.) What God gives us opportunity for, what our hand ſhall at any time find to be laid hand by our Creator. He is our great Maſter, and appoints every one his particular work, by his word and providence: he leys it to our hand, by giving us opportunities And ſo it is reſtrained to that which is good (2.) What God gives us ability for. He gives might, ſtrength of body and mind, comforts and conveniencies of life, as talents that we are to trade with. And we are not to abuſe theſe, but uſe them for the ends he gives them for.

(2.) The activity to be uſed in this buſineſs of life. *Do, do it*. Neglect not this your work, put it not off with delays, but do you timely and ſeaſonably, while the time and ſeaſon laſts. It is but a ſhort time, and therefore we muſt huſband it well.

2. A motive to preſs the exhortation. Do, for your doing time will be done ſhortly: and then if your work be not done, ye will be for ever undone And,

(1.) Our life in the world is but a journeying to the grave, the ſtate of the dead. Before we begin to walk alone, we begin to go to it, even from the womb: and in that journey there is no ſtopping; ſleep we or wake we, we are always going the other ſtep towards it

And

And when a man is in his prime, going and living at all ease, he is still going thither (2.) There is no doing there; if your work be not done ere you come there, it will never be done. This is the world for working, and that is the world for the reward of our work.

The scope of the text may be gathered up in the two following doctrinal observations.

DOCT. I. *It nearly concerns all men diligently to improve their opportunities and abilities in doing their work accordingly, while life, opportunities, and abilities last with them.*

DOCT. II *Our life in this world is a journey, a going to the grave, to the state of the dead, where there is no doing of our work any more*

Each doctrine shall be handled in order.

DOCT. I. *It nearly concerns all men diligently to improve their opportunities and abilities in doing their work accordingly, while life, opportunities, and abilities last with them.*

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What is the work to be done, while life, opportunities, and abilities last with us.

II. What are those opportunities and abilities which are to be diligently improved in doing our work.

III. Improve the subject.

I. Our first business is to shew what is the work to be done, while life, opportunities and abilities last with us. In the general, there is a threefold work laid to our hand

1 Work for ourselves, for our own good and welfare, Psal. xlix 18. *Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.* I put this in the first place, not that it is our chief work, more than ourselves are to be our chief end: but that fallen man will never work for God aright, till once he begin to work for himself, laying his own salvation to heart. We have all work to do for ourselves; work for this life, and for eternity. It is duty to see to the former, according to our opportunities and abilities: but not as most men do, to make

it our all, the whole buſineſs of our life; for it is but the leaſt part of what we have to do, Luke xi. 41, 42. We may ſay in this caſe, as Matth. xxiii. 23. "Wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and aniſe, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

2. Work for God, for his honour and glory in the world; 1 Cor. vi. 20. *Glorify God in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are God's.* God is our Maker, and he made us for himſelf; therefore we ſhould live, move, and be for him, Matth. v. 16 If we are Chriſtians, redeemed by the blood of his Son, this is a new tie to this work, Phil. i. 21. *To me to live is Chriſt.* This is little minded by moſt men, who never conſider for what uſe they are in God's world, or in Chriſt's church: what they are doing for God, wherein they are ſerviceable to him in promoting his glory in the world. Yet as God is our chief end, this is our chief work, and it will be enquired into at the day of accounts; and what we did with our opportunities and abilities for glorifying of him.

3. Work for our neighbours, for their good and welfare: according to the apoſtle's direction, Phil. ii. 4. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others.* God has made men in ſociety, and knit them together by the bond of a common human nature; and Chriſt has knit his people together by the additional tie, *one faith, one Spirit,* &c.; and ſo has bound every man to ſeek the good of mankind, and every Chriſtian the good eſpecially of fellow-Chriſtians, Gal. vi. 10 He gives men opportunities and abilities to benefit their fellow-creatures: and it ought to be a queſtion to every one of us, what uſe we are for in the world, towards the good of mankind? what benefit God's creatures, our fellows, have by us? what advantage Chriſt's members receive at our hand? This will be taken ſpecial notice of in the awful day of accounts, as appears from Matth xxv. God

God commands men to see to the temporal welfare of others, 1 Cor. x. 24. *Let no man seek his own; but every man another's wealth.* And as the poor are to look for the welfare of the rich, so the rich are under the same obligation to seek the good of the poor, as their fellow-creatures and fellow Christians. And therefore either masters or tenants depopulating grounds, and laying field to field, to the prejudice of the poorer sort their mean of living, is no doubt a crying oppression in the ears of the Lord of hosts, and will bring a curse on the selfish and unmerciful men who do it, Isa. v. 8, 9, 10. *May not I do with mine own what I will?* is a saying competent to JEHOVAH, who is absolute Lord of the creatures, as having made them of nothing; but to no man under heaven, no not the highest monarch, who in all his dealings is under the law of loving his neighbour as himself, and has but a limited power over what is his own.

He commands men also to seek the spiritual good of their neighbours, Rom. xv. 2. *Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.* And that so much the more as their souls is preferable to their bodies. Hence it is, that as soon as the grace of God reaches one's own heart, he is in a mighty concern to get other brands plucked out of the fire, and to share of that grace he partakes of, as did the woman of Samaria, John iv. It is Cain-like to be unconcerned for the spiritual good of others: sure it is devilish to go about to ensnare and entrap others into sin, and wrestle against their souls good.

And thus we may take up our work we have to do with our opportunities and abilities while they last, in these two particulars.

*First*, Salvation-work, Phil. ii. 12. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* We came into the world lost sinners; there is a possibility of our salvation; and we may get it, if we will improve our opportunities and abilities for that end. These opportunities are confined to the narrow compass of the time of

this life; and in that time God lays that work to our hands. And it concerns us all timely to ply it, for we must do it now or never. There is no working of that work in the grave, when the candle of life is blown out at death; as the tree falls, it must lie for ever. There are many pieces of salvation-work that we must do, while doing-time lasts with us. The chief whereof are these.

1. We must consider our ways, and come to ourselves by a sound conviction of sin, the sin of our nature, hearts, and lives. This is a work not to be delayed, lest opportunity and ability slip, Hag. i. 7. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.* Ability may be taken from us in this life, and we rendered incapable of a solid thought. In the other world the opportunity is gone. There indeed men will consider their ways, but it will be out of time. Now is the time for that work of consideration while in life and health. Ply it then, and see your ruined natural state, till it cause you to cry, *What shall I do to be saved?* Some go rambling through the world in a profane life, and in a moment slip down to the grave, never considering till it be out of time. Some go sleeping and dreaming through the world in ignorance or formality, and never lifts their eyes till in hell. But all that shall be heirs of salvation, take thought of their souls state in time.

2. We must come to Christ and unite with him by faith; for without that there is no salvation. Heb. xi. 6. Here is work, most necessary work for us, to embrace Christ for all his salvation, as held out to us in the gospel; to flee for refuge to the Redeemer's blood, and take shelter under that covert; to get from under the covenant of works and its curse, to be personally instated in the covenant of grace, and savingly interested in the blessings of it, John vi. 29. *This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* There is now an opportunity for it; Christ is offering himself and his covenant; delay it, and the opportunity may slip

slip you for ever, Matth. xxv. 10. In the other world there is no beginning to believe unto salvation.

3 We must get out our pardon of all our sins under the broad seal of heaven. A necessary work; for without it ye will perish in your sins, Matth. v 25. A man whose life being by the law adjudged to be taken from him, depended entirely on the king's pardon, would lose no time of suing for his pardon, lest it should come too late. Now is the time wherein heaven's pardon is to be had, and in a little that time will be gone. In death there is no pardon to be had, no removing of the curse. Yet how do men trifle in this matter, as if the pardon were to wait till they were ready to receive it?

4 We must be born again, become new creatures, get new hearts and a new nature, and be renewed in all the faculties of our souls after the image of God. Here is work to do, Ezek. xviii. 31. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" This is absolutely necessary work, John iii. 3. For *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" And now is the season of the new birth; but when death comes, it is gone. There is a mighty change in the grave indeed whither we are going, but there is no saving change there. The bodies that lie down there full of the sins of their youth, will rise with them again: and the sinful souls that parted with them at death, will meet them again in no better plight at the resurrection. Ye must be born again now or never.

5 We must repent of our sins. This is a work absolutely necessary, Luke xiii. 3. *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Heaven's gates are bolted against impenitent sinners. We must turn from our sins unto God, with hatred of, and hearty sorrow for them, otherwise we will die, we will perish in them, Ezek. xviii. 31. above cited. And now is the season for repentance; there is no repenting in the grave.

In

In the other world impenitent ſinners will doubtleſs change their minds, they will regret from the heart their graceleſs careleſs way; and they will wiſh a thouſand times that they had ſeen to themſelves in time: but their repentance there will be their torment; it will be out of time, not kindly, and will not be accepted.

6 We muſt mortify our luſts. This is not eaſy work, but it is abſolutely neceſſary: Rom. viii. 13. "For, (ſays the apoſtle,) if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live." We muſt either be the death of our luſts, or they will be the death of our ſouls. If one of them go, our life muſt go for its life; even that luſt which is moſt dear to us, and which we can moſt hardly part with, muſt be mortified. Matth. v. 29. and that work muſt be done now or never. When death comes, there is no more poſſibility of mortification; there is a bar drawn for ever betwixt damned ſinners and ſanctifying influences The ſtate of the damned is inconſiſtent with the fulfilling of ſome luſts; but however they may be kept from them, to their torment, there can be no kindly mortification of luſts there; but, on the contrary, ſin in the ruined ſoul will come to its perfection.

7. We muſt live to righteouſneſs, in works of holy obedience This is work to fill our hands every minute of our time, and neceſſary work, John xv. 14. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you." Luke vi 46. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay?" They who are now idle in life, will labour under the weight of wrath for ever, without hope of an end of their toil. Now Chriſt ſhapes out our work for us, and takes a proof of our obedience to him. If we neglect it now, there will be no time hereafter for it; for the other world is that wherein men receive the reward of their works, and working time is over there, John ix. 4.

8. We muſt perſevere in grace and good works to the end. This is work abſolutely neceſſary, for ſuch only

only shall get the heavenly crown, Matth. xxiv. 13. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Rev. ii. 10 "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" There is a danger of never entering on the way of the Lord, and a danger of apostasy and breaking off from it, when once a person is entered, Heb. x. 38, 39. If death catch us either of these ways, there is no mending of the matter for ever. That is a step off the way that can never be recovered.

9. *Lastly*, We must die well. This is a necessary piece of our work, our last work, on which much depends. If it be marred, there is no coming back to mend it, Job xiv. 14. "If a man die, shall he live again?" To die well is to die in the Lord, Rev. xiv. 13; to die in faith, Heb. xi. 13.; to die in union with Christ, in peace and favour with God, within the compass of the well-ordered covenant. It is not a business to lay by the thoughts of till the time of it come: but the business of our life should be to learn to die: and we should often be essaying it.

*Secondly*, Our generation-work, Acts xiii. 36. "This is the work we have to do for God and the generation in which we live, that we may be useful not for ourselves only, but for our God and fellow-creatures, Rom. xv. 7. It is remarked of Noah, that he was perfect in his generations. There are, by the wise wise dispensation of God, several generations of men in the world, one after another; one goes off the stage, and another succeeds. Each generation has its work assigned it by the sovereign Lord; and each person in the generation has his also And now is our time of plying of ours We could not be useful in the generation that went before us; for then we were not: nor can we personally in that which shall come after us; for then we shall be off the stage. Now is our time; let us ply it, and not neglect usefulness in our generation. This work may be reduced to these two general heads.

1. The duties of our station and particular calling and

and relations in the world, 1 Cor. vii 24 Every relation has a train of duties belonging to it, and God lays theſe duties on us as members of ſociety, for his glory and the good of others. That is the room which we have to fill up in the world. by a conſcientious performance of the duties incumbent on us. as placed on ſuch and ſuch a ſtation and relation. That is to ſay, if one is a miniſter, he is faithfully to ply his miniſterial work; if a huſband, a wife, a parent, &c. they are faithfully to ply the work proper to ſuch relations. For there is no doing of theſe duties in the grave, nor making up the defects there. Then all relations are diſſolved, and the difference of ſtations is no more. So that theſe things muſt be done now or never.

2. Duties of ſpecial opportunities and abilities, Gal. vi. 10. Sometimes the Lord puts in a man's hand a ſpecial opportunity of ſome ſervice, good work: which opportunity if he lets ſlip, he may poſſibly never have it again all his life, as Saul in the caſe of the Amalekites, and as in Eſau's caſe, Heb xii 17. So it is mens wiſdom and duty to ſtrike the iron while it is hot, to do the good they have oportunity to do, leſt if they miſs the tide, they never have acceſs to repair the defect. Sometimes God gives men abilities, that if they will, they can do ſuch a good thing. If they fall not in with it ſeaſonably, the time may come, when, if they never ſo fain would, it is beyond their power, Heb. xii. 17.

He that takes heed to theſe two particulars, does the work of his generation.

II I proceed to ſhew what are thoſe opportunities and abilities which are to be diligently improved in doing our work, the work of our ſalvation and generation. Theſe are all the advantages for working, which the Sovereign Lord and Maſter puts in our hands, with a charge to improve them in doing good with them, Luke xix. 12, 13. All is from him, and he has put them in our hand for his own ſervice: and if we miſimprove them, either by doing ill with them, or doing no good with them, our accounts will be with grief,

and

and not with joy; for he that gave us them will call us to an account for them, Luke xvi 2. He gives us theſe opportunities and abilities, not to lay by us for no uſe, and far leſs to put them to an ill uſe; but to do with them for his glory, and our own and others good.

1. The time of life is given men to do their work with, and ſhould be improved accordingly, John ix 4. *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me*, ſays Chriſt, *while it is day*. He might have cut us off from the womb, and then we would have had no time to do any thing: he might ere now have laid us in the duſt, and then our opportunity of working had been over. But we are ſtill in life, and our great buſineſs is to make ready for eternity. It is a precious time, an uncertain time, the only time for working. What uſe are we making of it? why ſhould we triſle it away, which when once gone can never be recalled? How ſad will it be, if our glaſs is run, while our work is undone?

2. The day of the goſpel; precious goſpel-ſeaſons are given us for that end. Theſe make the day of ſalvation, which need to be well inproved while they laſt, 2 Cor. vi. 2. *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of ſalvation*. Every ſabbath, ſermon, communion, *&c.* is a fair opportunity for peace with God, ſeeing to and advancing the ſoul's intereſt. In theſe the market of free grace is opened, and heaven's peace and pardon are proclaimed to rebels. Theſe precious ſeaſons will not laſt as to us, Chriſt will call in his ambaſſadors, and how ſoon his laſt call to us may come, we know not, Luke xiv. 24.

3. Seaſons of the Spirit's blowing are to be thus improved, Cant. iv. *ult.* Sometimes the power of God comes along with ordinances, and Chriſt has ſenſibly his hand at the hole of the lock of ſinners hearts; convictions faſten on them, by the word or providences, and there is an unuſual moving in the ſinner's ſoul. O the need of ſtriking in with theſe, to work out our ſalvation! Then is a fair gale for Immanuel's land, in which ſhould the ſinner ſet off for the port of heaven, he

he might ſurely at length arrive there. But the opportunity may ſoon be over, John iii 8. and not returning, the ſinner lies wind-bound, and cannot move So that many miſs of heaven for altogether by miſimproving it

4. Fair occaſions of doing good, and of ſervice to God, Gal. vi. 10. Sometimes the Lord gives men a fair opportunity of ſuch a piece of ſervice to him; and by his providence invites men to embrace it, and act for him; then they ſhould beſtir themſelves in a ſpecial manner. Theſe opportunities are many times long kept open, and yet not embraced, but delayed from time to time, till in end they go out of their hands; the ſheet is taken up to heaven, and the door is ſhut, Matth xxv. 10. And then there is no doing with them more.

Next, The abilities to be thus improved, while they laſt with us, are,

1. Soundneſs of mind. God has made man a reaſonable creature, given him judgment and reflection, a reaſoning faculty, and a memory; which are improved by education and uſe. Theſe may be of good uſe, while aſſiſted with the revelation made in the word. And they are to be diligently improved for our main concern and intereſt. But alas! how often are they thrown away on men's luſts, and confined to worldly intereſts! Now no man has a tack of theſe; they may be taken from him while life laſts; and yet without them there is no doing our work. The moſt ſolid man or woman God can ſmite with madneſs, or take the exerciſe of their reaſon from them; and then the party's ſtate muſt ſtand, for any viſible mean, where it was before that came on; they are not capable of altering it to the better.

2. Strength and health of body. All the duties of religion are beſt done when one is in health and ſtrength; for then the body is not a clog to the ſoul. And ſeveral of the duties of religion can hardly be done without it. A man cannot riſe out of a ſick-bed,

and

and go to a sermon or a communion table, go about the worship of God in his family. *&c.* Yet alas! what a deal of work is laid up for the sick-bed and death-bed, when men are most unfit for doing any thing? And in the mean time youth, health, and strength are spent in pursuit of the world and lusts But labour to make better use of them, some good use of them for eternity; for ere long ye will not have them to make use of at all: and it will be little comfort to think, that when ye had them, ye squandered them away on vanity, but laid them not out in your salvation and generation work.

3 Worldly substance. That is given of God to be improved for his honour: and whatever your portion of it is, the Lord has so far made you his stewards, and but stewards of it, who must give account to your Lord, how you have used it. God calls us to honour him with it, Prov. iii 9; and assuredly the more any has of it, the more it is required of them to lay out themselves for the honour of God, as being thereby put in the greater capacity to do for the honour of God in the world, Luke xii. 48. *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required:* though ordinarily the quite contrary course is taken. And men had need to improve it, while they have it, for it is mighty uncertain, Eccl. xi. 2.

4 *Lastly*, Power, authority, honour, reputation and respect These comes from God, who makes the difference in condition that is among men; some more, some less honourable, some to rule, and some to be ruled, *&c.* Psal. lxxv. 6, 7 *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* And all these he gives to be improved for himself, who is the fountain of power and honour. The more a man has of them, the more access he has to act for God: hence a word for a good cause from some will be more effectual than a struggle made for it by others. Heavy then must be their accounts be who make no conscience of doing the great work by

theſe. They are uncertain, and ſoon fly away too; while people have them, they would need to improve them leſt God be provoked to take from them, that which they would not uſe for his honour, but their luſts: *for* ſaith he, *them that honour me, I will honour; and they that deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed*, 1 Sam. ii. 30.

I ſhall ſhut up this doctrine with an uſe of exhortation.

While life, opportunities, and abilities laſt with you, ply your great work, the work of your ſalvation and generation; and do not delay it, but timely do your work. For enforcing this exhortation, let me ſuggeſt the following motives.

*Mot.* 1. Your work is great, and attended with much difficulty; therefore *work out your ſalvation with fear and trembling*, Phil ii. 12. If it were a trifling buſineſs that might be either done or not done as one thought fit; and when to be done, done eaſily; ye might perhaps cauſe it wait your time. But ſurely your time ſhould wait your work, and be carefully applied to it, huſbanding it well. For,

*1ſt*, It is neceſſary work, and muſt be done, or ye are forever undone, Luke x. 42. *One thing is needful.* It is work for your own ſalvation, and God's glory; and theſe are of all the moſt needful. It is not abſolutely neceſſary to your happineſs, that ye be healthy, wealthy, in reſpect and honour in the world: but that ye be gracious, believing, penitent, holy, &c. that ye live for God, and be uſeful for him. If ye ſleep in this your ſeed time, ye will beg in harveſt; if ye do not now, ye will ſuffer for it for ever.

*2dly*, It is difficult work, and not eaſily done; hence ſays our Lord, Luke xiii. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.* Many doing people will fall ſhort, becauſe they do not their work in the right manner, Eccl. x. 15. Yea, they that do beſt will find enough ado to get through it ſafely, 1 Pet. iv. 18. and not to mar it. Conſider,

(1.) I

(1.) It is heart-doing, doing with the heart, Prov. xxiii. 26. Among men if the work be done with the hands, whether it be with the heart or not, it is all a caſe. But though the tongue ſpeak well, the hands act well, and the feet carry the man in good ways; yet if the heart be not at the work, the work is not done to purpoſe, Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

(2.) It is undoing work, work wherein ye have to undo much of what is done, like the pulling down what has been wrong put up, the opening out of a raveled haſp. 1.) Your own life is a raveled buſineſs, much diſorder has been there; ye have woven your life into a web of ſin and contrariety to the divine will: ye have that to open out again, by faith, repentance, and mortification; elſe ye will be ſwept away like the ſpider in your own web, with the beſom of deſtruction, Ezek. xviii. 31. 2.) The way of the generation ye live in is a raveled buſineſs, a conſpiracy againſt God: ye muſt do your endeavour to undo that, and to bring it to rights. Ye muſt guard againſt being catched in their net, Acts ii 40 *Save yourſelves from this untoward generation.* Yea, ye muſt let yourſelves to break and undo it, for God's honour and the good of others; and ſo ye muſt ſtrive againſt the ſtream, or be carried headlong by it. And try it when ye will, ye will find it hard work; and many times ye will find that ye come little ſpeed, Jer. vi. 29. Yet ye muſt not give it over, 1 Pet. ii. 8. but bear up a teſtimony for God, Prov. xvii. 4; and that is your generation-work, Luke xi. 13.

(3.) It is counter-doing, doing a work wherein ye will find many doing againſt you, Matth. xi. 12. Apply yourſelves to it when ye will, ye will find it a labouring in the fire, where ye will have much ado to carry on the work, over the belly of oppoſition. 1.) Satan will do againſt you, 1 Pet. v. 8. 2.) The evil world will join iſſue with him. 3.) Your own corrupt heart will join iſſue with both.

(4.) It is doing above your ſtrength, your natural

ſtrength, 2 Cor. i. 8. We have work to do which our ſhort arms cannot reach, and our natural abilities are not ſufficient for. How then can it be done? Why, we muſt learn to fly on borrowed wings, and we muſt act with ſtrength borrowed from the Mediator, 2 Tim. ii 1 So there is no time to trifle.

*Mot.* 2 Ye have loud calls to your work, and it is dangerous to ſit them, Pſal xcv. 7, 8. Unleſs ye ſtop your ears, ye cannot miſs to hear them. Ye have,

1. The call of the word. God has given you the Bible in your hands, and every page of it bids you be doing quickly. He ſends his meſſengers with his meſſage to the ſluggards on their bed, and in the name of God it is ſounded in your ears, 2 Cor. vi. 2. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of ſalvation." Sit not the call, leſt the opportunity ſlip.

2. The call of pinching need and neceſſity. The caſe of your bodily wants makes you to labour for the meat that periſheth; and doth not the need of your periſhing ſouls call you aloud to ſee to them, that they be not loſt? The caſe of the generation, wherein ſo much diſhonour is done to God, calls you aloud to lay out yourſelf for God, Pſal. cxix. 126.

3. The call of providence. If ye look to the conduct of providence towards yourſelves and towards others, ye are warned to ſee to yourſelf in time. Many are dropping off into another world, and the living ſhould lay it to heart.

4. The call of conſcience. Heathens want not ſome checks that way, Rom. ii. 15. It is not to be thought, but thoſe who live under the goſpel, have now and then their alarms from within, to get out of their bed of ſloth. Is there not ſomething within, that ſays ye have delayed long enough, and that more delay may be dangerous?

*Mot.* 3 Ye have opportunities and abilities put in your hand for to do your work by them, Luke xix. 13. God gives you them to do with: why then ſhould ye not improve them? Conſider, I pray you,

1. Of

1. Opportunities and abilities are God's free gifts, given to be improved for him in his work. He does not light the candle of your life, and keep it burning, to put it under a bushel, or for you to use it against him. No wonder he is provoked in wrath to take away life, opportunities and abilities from them who make no good use of them.

2. Ye must give an account to God what ye have made of them, Luke xvi. 2.; what use ye have made of your years, your gospel-seasons, seasons of the Spirit's blowing, fair occasions of doing good presented to you; of your soundness of mind, strength of body, worldly substance, power and character. And it will be a heavy account, that so many years have been spent in God's world, and nothing done by the man for God and for his own soul; that so much health, strength, &c. &c. has been enjoyed, and all expended on the things of the world, the pursuit of lusts, &c.

3 The more you have had of them, and not improved, the greater will your condemnation be, Luke xii. 47. 48 We are all in the case of servants intrusted by the master, where some have more, some less; but the more one has, as on the one hand his conveniency for doing is greater, so on the other, the not improving of the greater trust will make the more heavy account.

*Mot.* 4 Ye are always doing something. Why, since it is so, will ye not do your proper, great, and necessary work? Man's life is a continued train of actions, and the soul of man, like a watch, goes as fast when she goes false, as when she goes true. So, properly speaking, there is no man who does nothing at all with his opportunities and abilities: but every body does something with them; howbeit most men do not do their proper work with them. So men are guilty not only of not improving, but of misimproving their opportunities and abilities. They do with them indeed, but they will not do that with them which God specially gave them for.

1. Instead of doing their great work with them, they

do next to nothing with them, like thoſe 2 Theſſ iii. 11. *working not at all.* If we conſider the buſineſs of moſt mens life with the opportunities and abilities put in their hand for doing; we will find that their whole life is ſuch an inſignificant piece of folly, as the action of that fooliſh emperor, who pretended to lead out an army to fight the enemy, and all he did was to cauſe them gather ſhells by the ſea-ſide In a word, their life is a continued trifling; always doing, but never doing any thing to the purpoſe. Their precious time and abilities are ſpent in labouring for the wind; and that they will find when they come to ſtep into another world, and caſt up the account of their gain, Eccl. v. 16.

How many may ſay, I have been buſy managing my houſe, but neglected my heart; gained ſilver and gold, but no ſaving grace; ſeen many harveſts cut down, but mine own ſeed for glory is not ſown yet; I have been careful for my body, but my ſoul is yet lying in a bleeding, periſhing caſe? This is but trifling, to ſpend your time in caring for your body, and neglecting your ſoul.

(1.) Thy body is mortal, but thy ſoul immortal. If men were to die like beaſts, they might live like beaſts, eat, drink, ſleep, and work. But thy ſoul will remain in life, when thy body dies: when thy tongue begins to falter in thy mouth, and thou canſt ſcarce ſpeak an articulate word, it will be vigorous: when friends are cloſing thine eyes, it will be going off to compear before the tribunal of God.

(2.) Thy ſoul craves more than the body. While the body is living, a little will ſerve its back and belly: and when dead a few feet of earth, which none will grudge it. But nothing leſs than an infinite good, that is, God himſelf, can ſatisfy the ſoul. He was a fool who ſaid, "Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry," Luke xii. 19.

(3.) Thy ſoul is of far more worth than the body. It is a ſpiritual, immortal ſubſtance, not to be laid in the balance with the cottage of clay. The ſoul is the diamond

mond in the ring, the jewel in the cabinet, the dignified honourable inhabitant in the cottage of clay, Mat xvi 26.

What do they then but trifle, who are busy about the many things, forgetting the one thing needful? They are, in their manner of life, like the spider, that spends its own bowels to make up its web: and when all is done, at one stroke of a besom the poor spider is either killed in its own web, or by it drawn to death.

2. Instead of doing their great work with them, they do worse than nothing with them, they do mischief with them, Hos. xi. 2. and xiii. 6. Hence Solomon remarks, that "the prosperity of fools destroys them;" and the apostle remarks, that "the gospel is the savour of death unto death to many." They who do not improve their opportunities and abilities for God's honour and their own salvation, cannot miss to improve them to God's dishonour and their own destruction: for the soul of man is of nature too active to be doing nothing at all: so if it be not doing good, it will be doing evil, for it must be doing something. If the matter were weighed in an even balance, it would be found, that many are at as much pains to ruin their own souls, as might possibly serve to save them, if they would but turn their pains to run in another channel. Many a rack Satan puts men on in his service, which the way of duty would set men free from, Job xxiv. 15, 16, 17. Jeremiah testifies, they *weary themselves to commit iniquity*, Jer. ix 5. See Psal. vii. 14. Hab ii. 13.

Now, since ye are still doing something with your opportunities and abilities, why will ye not do what ye should do with them? Ye are running in a race, why do ye not run in the right way, rather than the wrong? We may say in some sense, that God does not call you to do more work than ye do; but other work, your great work.

*Mot.* 5. Your opportunities and abilities for doing will not last; but they will be short-lived. We have a day, and it is but a day we have, Luke xix 42. a hireling's day, that is soon over, Job vii 1. Time

runs

runs with a rapid course, and carries with it all our opportunities and abilities for doing our work. Our life is but a vapour, that soon evanisheth; a shadow that flies away, a handbreadth soon passed over. So,

1. You must now or never do your work, John ix 4. Working-time will soon be gone. How can we be at ease, while so much time is over, and so little of our work by hand? Yet are not the shadows of the evening stretching out on many, while yet they have been in no due concern where to take up their eternal lodging?

2. If the work we have to do be sore, it will not be longsome. He that is tired with his journey may be refreshed, while he sees he is near the end. The saints afflictions are but for a moment, their weeping but for a night: the watchmen will be called in from their posts.

*Mot.* 6. It is utterly uncertain to you when they shall come to an end. We are tenants at will, have no tack of our life, and know not how soon we may be called off, Matth xxiv. 44, 46. So a moment's delay here may be an eternal loss. Our abilities may be at an end, before our time. However our time is uncertain as to the end of it, but, end when it will, there will be no more opportunity nor ability for doing.

*Mot.* 7 Our time when once gone can no more be recalled, no more than the candle burnt to snuff can be lighted again. It is bald in the hindhead, and there is no bringing of it back. As the tree falls, so it must lie.

*Mot. last* If our great work be not done in time, we are undone for ever. If time is lost, our eternal salvation is lost.

Doct. II Our life in this world is a journey, a going to the grave, to the state of the dead, where there is no doing of our work any more.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider this journey we are on.

II. Shew that there is no doing of our work any more, when once we are come to our journey's end, to the state of the dead.

III. Make

III. Make some improvement of each head separately.

I. I shall consider this journey we are on. And here we may take a view of,

1. The point where we begin our journey. We begin it from the womb, from the first moment of our receiving life there. As soon as we become living souls in the womb, we begin our journey to the grave For then we are sinful creatures, Psal. li. 5. and therefore dying creatures. So we are going this journey, before we can set a foot on the ground, yea before we see the light of this world.

2 The point where it is ended. The term to which we are going, is the grave, the state of the dead. The travellers never halt till they be there. That is the place where all men meet from all the different places of the world. It is *the house appointed for all living*, Job xxx 23. Their baiting-houses by the way may be very different, as a palace, and a cottage, but the lodging-house at the end of the journey is one. They lie down alike in the dust.

3. The journeying or travelling itself is the motion between these two points: and that is our living in this world. What is our living here? It is not a rest; that is not to be expected here. It is a motion, a journeying motion. And it is just a journeying, a going from the womb to the grave; a coming from the womb of our mother woman, and going in again to the womb of our mother earth, Job i. 21. That is the life we have here.

4. The place we go through in our journey to the grave in this present world; where the sun rising and setting makes days and nights, where are so many springs and harvests, summers and winters in our time; and, what is of all most remarkable, where God sends his messengers to meet us in our journey, to direct us to the road, by which we may get safe to the journey's end. Many look on this world as their dwelling-place, Psal. xlix 11. and so as their resting-place, Luke xii. 19. But it is but our journeying-place, which we tra-

travel through; like a town in a traveller's road, who comes in at the one end of it, and goes out at the other, Eccl. i 4. Therefore the godly take it so, *confessing that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth*, Heb. xi. 13.

5 The way we make in this journey is our time. Some have a longer, some a shorter way to their journey's end. But look back, and so much time as is over your head, so much way have ye made, and the nearer ye are to the end. Time goes, yea flies away, and as it goes, you quickly cut the way, so that it grows every moment shorter and shorter, and you are nearer the grave.

6 The several stages in our way, which accordingly are to some more, to others fewer, are to all but a very few, whereby we may know that it is not a long journey.

(1.) The first stage is infancy, that wherein the journey is begun. While we are in that first stage, we are going indeed to the grave, but poor we know not in the mean time whither we are going. Then we are under a necessity of dying, but know not that we must die, nor know we any thing of the state of the dead; and therefore can do nothing to prepare for it. Our concern in that stage is first confined to meat, and then extends to cloathing, but no farther.

(2.) The second stage is childhood, wherein we are more advanced in our journey. Then do we begin to be informed, that there is such a thing as dying, as a heaven and a hell. But how rude are our notions of these things in that stage, and how unwelcome! They are like a dream to us, consisting of misshapen imaginations How hard is it to be able to have any tolerable conception of the way to be saved, or so much as to conceive aright of the work we have to do! How little of the work can then be done till that stage be over? Things of the world are more natural; yet in that stage it is hard to ply to them, or to any thing but such trifles as will be the scorn of our riper years. So there

are

are two ſtages over ere we have well begun to know where we are, and what we have to do. The morning is gone.

(3.) The next ſtage is youth, which is the forenoon of our day; the ſtage of our way, wherein we begin to know ourſelves entering into this world. But how doth vanity and folly fill up that period of man's life, that the going through it is turned into a play or a dream, if not into a fit of madneſs in wickedneſs, caſting off all bands, unleſs it be in ſome whom grace early reacheth. They think they have a great part of their way before them, and reckon it needleſs to be as yet much concerned about the journey's end, though two ſtages are over before that, and they will ſoon find themſelves paſt that ſtage too. So true it is, that *childhood and youth are vanity*, Eccl. xi. 10.

(4.) The fourth ſtage is middle age, in which the foam of youth is fallen, and the infirmities of old age have not yet overtaken the man, and is therefore called *the beſt eſtate*, Pſal xxxix. 5. Now he is in beſt caſe in point of wiſdom and management. His thoughts are ripened, and his ſtrength is fit for executing the product of theſe his riper thoughts. But how is he then wrapt up in a thicket of cares of this world, that often he cannot find the way out ſeriouſly to conſider his latter end? But this alſo is ſoon over, and he quickly arrives at the.

(5.) Laſt ſtage, old age. Then his ſun is remarkably turned, it is faſt declining, and he remembers the days of his youth and middle age, as waters that paſs away. They ſometimes run full; but now that brook is dried up. If his judgment continues firm yet he is ordinarily beſet with infirmities of body, whereby he is rendered more unfit for action: and ſometimes judgment and memory fail too. The tabernacle is going down, till at length it lie along on the earth to riſe no more till the heavens be no more. So the days come wherein men have no pleaſure: and then quickly the mourners go about the ſtreets; the man is at his journey's end.

Theſe

These are the few stages in our way: but it is but a few that see them all. Some find the end of the journey in the first stage, some in the second, &c.

7. *Lastly*, The steps we make in our way on this journey. Every breathing we make, every pulse that beats, is a step in the way. Whether we sleep or wake, our breath and blood is going: and so we are going on toward the grave. Infinite wisdom has determined how often we shall breathe in and out the air, how often our blood shall go the round in our bodies, and what number of pulses it shall make. These are continued one on the back of another, as so many steps by which this journey is made. And at length the last pulse beats, the last breathing is made, wherby one gives up the ghost: and that is the last step, and so we are at our journey's end.

I shall now make some improvement of this first head.

*Use.* 1. of information Is our life in this world a journey, a going to the grave? then,

1. This life is a transitory, passing thing, that will not last, but will soon be over, Job viii. 9. Form right notions of life from this; you will find it is but a short preface to a long eternity; an inconsiderable point between two extremes, the womb and the grave; so short, that Solomon passes it by in his assigning a time to every thing. Eccl. iii 2.

2. The state of the dead, and what lies beyond it, is our state of continuance, which we are to be mainly concerned for. This life is our journeying; at the end of our journey we will find the place of our abode. The grave is our long home, heaven or hell our eternal home. This world is but the passage, as through a strange country to our home. Therefore Job was in the right, to render himself familiar with it, chap xvii. 14 *I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.*

3. Man at his best estate is vanity Consider him in his prime, when his health and strength are at their meri-

meridian, death is gaining ground of him: however ſtately he goes, he is going towards the grave, however little he thinks of it While he riſeth, he doth but ſwell like a bubble of water, which in a moment is broken and gone.

4. There is great need to ſee how we improve it, that we miſpend it not, Matth v. 25. We came into this world without any thought of our own, how to be provided for in it. But wo to us in the other world, if we take not thought while we are in the way.

*Uſe* 2. of exhortation to ſeveral things. Is our life a journey to the grave, to the ſtate of the dead? then,

1. Acquaint yourſelves timely with the God and Lord of that land, and make up your peace and friendſhip with him, that when ye come there, ye may be treated as his friends, and not as his enemies. Job xxii. 21. *Acquaint now thyſelf with him, and be at peace: thereby good ſhall come unto thee.* For if that be neglected while we are in the way, ſad will be our lot at the end of the journey, Matth. v. 25 God is now willing to be at peace with us in his Son, who is Lord of that land, *has the keys of hell and of death* Rev. i. 18. and is now offering himſelf and his ſalvation to us, Rev xxii. 17. yea offering himſelf in a marriage-covenant, Hoſ. ii. 19. Matth xxii. 4. 'It will then be our wiſdom, to ſee that our Maker, the Lord of that place, be our Huſband now: and then be ſure he will ſee well to us there.

2. Be ſure to take the ſafe road in that journey; and beware of the road of deſtruction. All the world is on the journey: but they are divided into two companies, taking two different roads, the road of eternal life, and the road of eternal death. The ſafe road is the way of holineſs, Iſa. xxxv. 8 *An high way ſhall be there, and it ſhall be called the way of holineſs, i. e.* the holy way, *viz.* Chriſt the perſonal way, John xiv. 6 and goſpel holineſs and obedience, the real way, Col. ii. 6 It is a ſtrait way, that will not allow room for the ſinful latitude which corrupt nature affects, and

therefore ye will get but little company upon it. The road of deſtruction is the way of ſin, the way of unbelief and unholineſs. It is a broad way, and there the multitude goes: there go the profane, there the groſsly ignorant, there the mere moraliſt, there the groſs and cloſs hypocrite, Matth. vii 13, 14. Take your marks of the way by the word. Pſal xvii. 4.

3. Aſſociate yourſelves with thoſe on the ſafe road, and beware of chuſing for your companions thoſe on the broad way, Prov xiii. 20. Pſal. xvi. 3. Travellers deſire company in their journey; but then they chuſe thoſe who are going their road, not thoſe who are going a contrary one. If they do, one may conclude that they have left their road for love of company. And many ſad inſtances of this there are on this journey, 1 Cor. xv. 33. Hence many ſometimes hopeful, by the ſociety thy chuſe, firſt turn untender, then looſe profeſſors, and at laſt apoſtates; and ſo fall from the threſhold of heaven, down to the pit, Pſal. cxxv. *ult.*

4. Beware of forgetting that ye are on a journey, travellers, ſtrangers and pilgrims in the world, Heb. xi. 13. This world that we go through is very charming to the corrupt heart; inſomuch that many come to be ſo taken with it, that they think themſelves at home in it. And ſo they mind nothing but building tabernacles in it, reſting and ſolacing themſelves therein. They ſeek no better home, they deſire no better, Phil. iii. 19. and ſo they are ruined when they awake out of their dream, if they awake not timely But ſee that ye count heaven your home, the world the place of your pilgrimage, and your preſent life your journey homeward.

5. Beware of loading yourſelves in your journey, Heb. xii. 1. Men on a journey will be very loth to carry needleſs weights about them, but endeavour what they can to be as light and expedite as may be. But alas! moſt men on this journey think never to get enough on their back; and what is it? juſt a backful of thick clay, Hab. ii. 6. a defiling load of the world.

Men

Men lade themſelves this way, ſtill graſping at more and more of the world, laying field to field, till they are juſt overwhelmed with the buſineſs of this life, and by anxiety about the things of the world, and undue eagerneſs, whether they have little or much. They go beſt through the world, that lade themſelves leaſt with it, 1 Cor. vii 29, 30, 31.

6 Take heed of carrying along with you ſuch things as are apt to entangle you in the road, and cauſe you to fall, Heb. xii. 1. *Let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us.* A metaphor taken from long garments, that cannot miſs to retard one on a journey. Unmortified luſts are theſe entangling things, eſpecially the predominant one. In our way there are many ſtumbling blocks, and theſe diſpoſe us to fall over them. In it are many ſnares, and theſe catch men by their unmortified luſts, as thorns in the way catching hold of the traveller's looſe garments. And many a mire are ſinners by this means caſt down in, who do not by faith, mortification, and watchfulneſs, gird up the loins of their mind.

7 Let not afflictions, croſſes, and hardſhips in this world ſink too deep with you: for you are neither to ſtay with it nor them, 1 Cor vii. 30. Ye are on a journey, not in your place of continuance. You need the leſs to value the frowns of a preſent world; for ere long ye will be beyond them, and both the ſmiles and frowns of it will be buried in oblivion. The conſideration of our ſhort and uncertain time in the world, would be an excellent antidote againſt immoderate ſorrow; for we are here but as actors in a play, where it is no great matter whether one be the king or the peaſant; for in a little time the fable is ended, and each appears in the ſtation he really is.

8. Learn to fetch your comforts in your journey from the place ye are going to, the other world, Heb. xi. 13 And the doctrine of the goſpel contained in the Bible is the ſtorehouſe of theſe comforts, and faith is the mean whereby to draw them out, Pſal. xciv. 19.

and xvii. 13 The believing meditation of the better world, is the beſt ſtay for the traveller's heart, under the toil and hardſhips of the way. There is ſuch a thing as the traveller's ſong, to be ſung by the way. David had learned it, and he tells you where, Pſal. cxix 54 *Thy ſtatutes have been my ſongs in the houſe of my pilgrimage.*

9 Be not ſolicitous for great things in the world, but be content with what Providence lays to your hand, Jer xlv 4 5 Being on a journey, it is no great matter though your accommodations be not pompous. Men on a road do not expect feaſts, nor do they value them. A traveller's dinner is ſoon dight; he takes as he comes to, for he may not ſtay. O that we could learn the leſſon, and labour to ſecure eaſe and fulneſs to ourſelves in the place whither we are going, and keep up a holy indifference as to our entertainment on the road

10. Correct your vain imaginations and concluſions, in all conditions of life, by a lively faith of this truth. In a time of proſperity, men are apt to be full of towering imaginations, Pſal. xlix 11.; they feed themſelves with golden dreams, put adverſity far from their thoughts, full reckoning on to-morrow, and that to-morrow will be as this day. But correct the miſtake; ye are on a journey, and may be at the end of it ere ye are aware. In adverſity the man is apt to ſay, It will never be over: but that is a miſtake too; for our ſorrows as well as our joys here are ſhort-lived, and will ſoon be at an end

11 *Laſtly*, Let preparation for death be the main buſineſs of your life For your abiding happineſs and miſery depends on what iſſue your journey takes: and now is the time, the only time to fix that point He that lives in Chriſt ſhall die in him, and dying in him be happy for ever. And he who gets no time into Chriſt while he lives, will find the door ſhut when he is dead, and no more acceſs to ſalvation. Therefore prepare in time. See to your ſtate, that ye be in that reſpect

fit

fit to die; that ye be out of your natural ſtate, and brought into a ſtate of grace. And watch, and enure yourſelves to a dying frame, that ye may be always as on the wing for your departure.

II. The next thing to be conſidered is, That there is no doing of our work any more, when once we are come to our journey's end, to the ſtate of the dead.

There are two things that will ſet this in a clear light

1. Then our day is gone, and the night is come, John ix 4. The ſtate of the dead is called a *night*, becauſe the darkneſs of the night puts an end to working, as the light of the day gives an opportunity for it. When death is come, the ſun of the goſpel is ſet on the man; and to thoſe who burnt day-light while they had it, God will not ſet up a new light in the grave, which is "the land of darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death; a land of darkneſs, as darkneſs itſelf, and of the ſhadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkneſs, Job x 21, 22.

2. Then the ſentence for eternity is paſſed on men. The next ſtep after death is to the tribunal of God, where men are judged and ſentenced according to their deeds done in the fleſh, Heb. ix. 27. So,

(1.) The time of God's patience with impenitent ſinners is at an end. The door is ſhut, Matth. xxv 10. The mercy and goodneſs of God opens a door of grace for ſinners for term of life, long-ſuffering patience keeps it open during that time; but the term of life being expired, the door is ſhut, ſinners can be waited on no longer, juſtice takes place.

(2.) Our probationary time is at an end, and our ſtate is fixed unalterably for all the ages of eternity, Luke xvi. 26. While mens life in this world laſts, they are on their trials for another world: but ſentence being paſſed after death, they are brought to a fixed point of happineſs or miſery.

I ſhall conclude this ſubject with ſome improvement of this head.

USE 1. of information. Hence we may learn,

1. That the time of our life in this world is exceeding precious; it is a golden spot, more to be valued by a guilty creature than all the wealth of the world, as being the opportunity, and the only opportunity for settling the business of our eternal salvation. When the Lord is on a throne of grace for us, then is the time of his dispensing of pardons, then is the time of the ship of the gospel lying in our harbour, bound for Immanuel's land, ready to take in passengers; which if it once hoist sail, and set off to sea, the passengers are for ever left hopeless on the shore. O how inexcusable are men trifling away their precious hours!

2. That the moment of death is of vast consequence, inasmuch as it is the concluding point of our working time, the time of our trial, immediately succeeded by an unalterable state in eternal happiness or misery. For as the tree then falls, it must lie for ever. If one prays, communicates, &c. wrong at a time, he may have access to mend it: but once dying wrong, there is no helping of that.

3. Happy they who dispatch their work timely, while they are in the land of the living: for their work is done, before working time is over, Rev. xiv 13. When they come to die, they have no more ado but to die, and that of itself is sufficient work to fill one's hand.

4. Sad is the case of those who misspend their time, whose life is at an end, before their great work for eternity is done. For their case is hopeless, since there is no doing of their great work then any more.

USE 2 of exhortation. What ye have to do, do quickly, without delay. And,

1. Do your salvation-work without delay, Phil ii 12. Ye are by nature lost sinners, but by grace ye may be saved. But none can expect to be brought into a state of salvation in a morning dream. The work of faith, repentance, regeneration, and mortification, is not easy. Give yourselves no rest, till once ye are brought into a state of peace with God, till ye have once shot the gulf as to con-

condemnation, and your eternal happiness be secured. Then will ye live holily and happily; and come death when it will your great work is done, ye are habitually prepared for it. If otherwise, death may take you unawares, and in a moment make you for ever miserable.

2. Do the work of your generation without delay. Consider what is the work of your station and relation, the work for God and the good of others that providence puts an opportunity in your hand to do: and do it quickly; for if ye delay it, the opportunity may be for ever taken out of your hand. Consider,

(1.) To put off your great work to another time yet to come, is inconsistent with a sincere purpose of setting about it. 1 Pet. iv. 2, 3. Who having burning coals in his bosom, would put off throwing them out till a more convenient season, another hour, or another minute? He that is not fit to-day, will be less so to-morrow.

(2.) The longer ye delay, the harder will your work be, when it comes to the setting to. Sin is like a water, the farther from the head, the deeper, and the harder to get over. The longer ye continue in sin, the heart grows harder, the understanding more blind, the will more perverse, and the affections more carnal.

(3.) *Lastly*, It is most foolish and unreasonable to delay. How can one delay a work till to-morrow, which must be done, else he is ruined for ever, when he is not sure of another hour? Jam. iv. 13, 14. "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Remember what was said to the rich man, Luke xii. 20. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" I hope we are agreed about the necessity of your dispatching your great work: the only question is, When? God says,

To-

To-day. Reason says so too; for to-morrow is not yours. The conclusion then is, Do it immediately. Up then and be doing.

THE

# Distinguishing Characters

OF

# TRUE BELIEVERS.

## X. In relation to the happy Effect of Christ's Good-will in the word of Grace *.

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LUKE xix. 5.

*Zaccheus, make haste, and come down: for to-day I must abide at thy house.*

THough our sun of the gospel at this day is a winter sun, having light, but little heat, ye and we, ministers and people, must be doing. It is good to be in Christ's way: he loves to surprise sinners with a cast of free grace: whereof we have a notable instance in the text.

Christ passing through Jericho, and a great throng being about him, Zaccheus is taken with a mighty desire to see him: but being a little man, and our Saviour but of an ordinary stature, not like Saul, who, by the height of his stature overtopping all about him, might have been seen by a little man even in a croud; (God shewed in Christ of how little value such things are), he, to satis-

* This Sermon was preached at Ettrick, June 11. 1727 immediately before the administration of the Lord's Supper.

satisfy his curiosity, ran before, and gets up into a tree, to see what like a man he was. In his Bible, and in Christ's doctrine and miracles, he might have seen him by an eye of faith to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world: but he was spiritually blind. He had no particular business with him; he was healthy and wealthy, and felt no need of him; otherwise he would have cried to him, as the blind man did, *Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me,* Luke xviii 38. He only wanted a sight of a man so talked of.

Christ coming to the place makes a halt, for there was the time and place for the dawning of everlasting love on Zaccheus. And,

1. He gives him a look, and fixes his eyes on him; a sign that he had a serious purpose about him. Such a look set Peter's heart a-melting; and there is no reason to doubt but this look surprised Zaccheus, made his heart move out of its place, and set it a-trembling, not knowing but instantly he might make him drop down dead off the tree before the multitude, considering how severely God threatened gazing at mount Sinai, and how dear it cost those of Bethshemesh for looking into the ark.

2. He gives him a word, a word of grace, no less surprising than the look, which instantly changed and transported his trembling heart, "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." That it was such a word, a savingly-effectual call to him, joyfully closed with by faith, ver. 6. appears from (1.) The visible effect of it in true repentance, ver. 8. "Behold, Lord, (says he,) the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." (2.) The testimony of Christ as to his faith, ver. 9. "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham." Say not, that there is nothing here but about coming down from a tree; for Christ's word is like himself, that has a glory in it not to be perceived but by

by the spiritual eye. So it is with the word of the gospel to this day; they whose eyes are opened, and hearts touched with it, see a glory and feel a power in it that is hid to all the multitude beside. Wherefore the sense of these words was a compound one, made up of an external part, lying open to the view of the whole multitude that heard them, and an internal part mystical and secret, and clear to Zaccheus, however hid from others. They are like Jonathan's *crying after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not.* Of whom it is said, *And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter,* 1 Sam. xx 38, 39. In the words then,

1. There is an open display of the grace and good-will of a Saviour to Zaccheus in particular, proposed to him to be believed and credited. And it consists of two parts.

(1.) Christ's readiness and willingness to meet with him, to receive and be received by him: so the grace of union with Christ was proposed to him. This was couched in these words, *Zaccheus, come down;* as if he had said, "Zaccheus, come away to me, I wait you here to receive and be received by you. There is a thronging about me, but whatever is of them, I have a particular good-will to you."

(2.) Christ's inviting himself to Zaccheus's house, and so a desire and design of communion with him, though he was a sinner, such a sinner as many in that multitude would abhor being his guest. But he shews a good-will to him, to come over all that, to entertain and be entertained by him.

2. There is a peremptory call to him to embrace this grace and good-will, proposed to him to be complied with *Zaccheus, make haste, come down,* viz. to me. And here there is,

(1.) How it was to be embraced, *viz.* by Zaccheus's coming to Christ. A bodily motion was in this case necessary, but the spiritual motion of the soul by faith

faith was the great thing aimed at. Believing the grace and good-will of Chriſt diſplayed to him in Chriſt's word of grace, he is required to betake himſelf to it, by truſting on it for his ſalvation, as heaven's ſecurity granted him, and claiming and uſing it as his own, in all the effects thereof in communion with him whoſe grace it is.

2. The manner of the coming required. [1.] It is a coming down. Zaccheus was ſitting on high, and looking down on Chriſt, when Chriſt began with him. So is every ſinner before the good work is begun on them. But the word of power calls them down from their heights; and coming to Chriſt is coming down from them. Humiliation of ſoul is twiſted with true faith, and runs through the whole of it. [2.] A ſpeedy coming down, *Make haſte*, &c. "Haſte as if the tree were breaking and falling with your weight, and you could not ſit ſafe there one moment longer." Whatever off-puts the ſinner makes as to coming to Chriſt, while the heart is not touched with the power of grace, as ſoon as efficacious grace touches it, the ſinner can no longer reſiſt, but comes to Chriſt like a ſandy brae ſliding down in a break.

The doctrine I obſerve from the words is,

DOCT. When Chriſt and the ſinner have the happy meeting for union and communion, Chriſt gives the ſinner a word of grace, that diſcovers a good-will in him to the ſinner in particular, and hales the ſinner down from his heights away to the Lord Jeſus. Thus the happy-meeting is brought about.

In handling this doctrine, I ſhall conſider,

I. The Lord's diſcovering a good-will to the ſinner by a word of grace.

II. The Lord's haling down the ſinner from his heights to himſelf by his word of grace.

III. Apply in an uſe of exhortation.

I. I am to conſider the Lord's diſcovering a good-will to the ſinner by a word of grace. This ye may take up in theſe five things.

1. The

1. The word of the law goes before the word of grace to the sinner. Zaccheus got a piercing look, before he got the word of grace. The holy law glances into the dark soul, and awakens it: the Sinai lightnings lighten the sinner who was going on in darkness, and give him a broad view of the holiness of God, the spirituality of the law, the sinfulness of his life, heart, and nature, Psal. l. 21 "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence (says God to the sinner): thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." The word of grace is not valid without this previous effect of the law.

2. The sinner begins to fear a design of ruin upon him. Therefore the law is called *the ministration of death*, 2 Cor iii 7. The prodigal presently cries, *I perish*. Guilt lying on the conscience stings, and makes secret whispers within the man's breast, that fill him with jealousies of a design in heaven for his destruction, as we find in the case of the Israelites in the wilderness, Numb. xvii. 10 12. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again, before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not. And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish." And this may haunt the man like a ghost many a day; and can hardly miss to do so, after an awakening, till the soul come to Christ by believing.

3. The Lord sends the gospel to the fearful jealous sinner. That is the word of grace, wherein Christ's love and good-will to self-destroying sinners is held forth. And it is a proper mean to cure the sinner of his secret jealousies of him, and to bring him to believe his good-will towards him. There he is represented as Saviour of the world by office, and consequently as his Saviour, 1 John iv. 14 *We have seen and do testify*, says the apostle, *that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*; an endearing, heart-

heart-quieting character: the good design of his coming in that character, John xii. 47. *I came not to judge the world, but to save the world:* and of his Father's sending him, John iii. 17 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved:* his good-will to the work of their salvation, 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Yea, there down-right promises of life and salvation to sinners indefinitely are held forth as Christ's legacies left them to be enjoyed by believing and applying them; hence says the apostle, Heb. iv. 1. "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" Nay, the benefits contained in these promises are declared to be so far theirs, that they may come to Christ as their own Saviour, and take possession of them by faith, as their own mercies, 1 John v. 11. *This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.*

4. The Lord makes the word of grace touch the sinner's particular case. The blessed words of the gospel holding in general to the man, are like so many arrows flying over his head: he thinks they may be very true to others, but he finds them not directed to him; and the good-will in them, he thinks, is to others, but not to him. At length the word touches his particular case, as surely as if such a word had been put in the Bible just for him, or as if the minister had known his case, and were speaking just to him. *Zaccheus*, says Christ; he names him as if they had been acquainted. Hence the spouse relates in her case, Cant. iii. 3, 4. "The watchmen that go about the city, found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth." Thus the sinner perceives that Christ has something to say to him.

5 *Lastly*, The Lord opens and applies the word of grace secretly to the sinner in particular, though it be

spoken to all in general; which is as it were an internal word. This is called the *demonstration of the Spirit*, 1 Cor. ii. 4. Christ breathes grace and good-will to sinners in the gospel: but they cannot perceive it, men cannot make them see it: but the Spirit demonstrates it to them powerfully. He shines on the word of the grace of the gospel, and illustrates it, on the dark mind of the sinner, and illuminates it, so that he sees that word of grace and the good-will in it is really to him in particular, and firmly believes it, ver 5. the Spirit with the word attesting the good-will of Christ to the sinner in the word of his grace. Thus the same Spirit, who before applied the doctrine of the law to the sinner in particular, for his conviction, applies the gospel to him in particular, to bring him to Christ by faith. And the effect of it is, he believes the gospel with a particular application of the grace and good-will in it to himself, howbeit it may be attended with doubts and fears still, Mark ix 24 *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* But the faith of Christ's good-will to the sinner is so far above the doubts of it, that it hales the sinner down from all his heights to Jesus Christ and this his free grace, to venture his all there.

II. I proceed to consider the Lord's haling down the sinner from his heights to himself by his word of grace: which we may take up in these four things.

1. The soul is humbled by it, and tumbled down to the dust of Christ's feet. And this appears in these things.

(1) The soul finds it has nothing but the grace and good-will of Christ, left to it, to trust to now, either for a rest to the conscience or to the heart. All its law-righteousness, all its big expectations of satisfaction from the creature, tumble down like a shooting brae under its feet, Jer. xvi. 19 *The Gentiles*, says the prophet, *shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.*

(2.) The soul sees its utter unworthiness of Christ and his grace, that it has nothing to commend it to him,

him, Matth. viii. 8. *Lord*, says the centurion to Christ, *I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof*; and wonders at the matchless freedom of grace to such a wretched creature. The glory of Christ, and of his grace and good-will, shines so bright, that it sinks the sinner to nothing in his own eyes.

(3.) The soul is content of Christ on any terms, and with Paul says, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts ix. 6. The man used to be off and on with Christ before; he would be his on such terms, but not on such terms: but all the exceptions and reserves are thrown by now, and now he would have Christ and his grace at any rate.

2. The soul is drawn by it, John xii. 32. *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* There is grace in the Mediator's lips, heavenly oratory which the sinner can no more resist. His former backwardness is killed with Christ's good-will appearing in the word of grace: he is a captive to the love of Christ.

3. The soul is impressed with divine authority by it, requiring it to believe on Christ, 1 John iii. 23. *This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* The sinner sees glorious Christ held forth to him in that word, and feels not only upon his heart the weight of absolute need pressing him forward, but also upon his conscience the weight of the authority of heaven pressing him forward; and as by the former he may not, by the latter he dare not but embrace him, over the belly of felt unworthiness.

4. *Lastly*, The soul is hastened by it to Christ, Psal. lxviii. 31. *Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.* The sinner puts off not a moment longer, but comes freely away to Christ, like water that has got a free vent, Isa ii. 2. *All nations shall flow unto it.* The soul lets go all its other holds, and casts itself on the Mediator's grace and good-will in the word of grace for all, and holds by that, resolved never to let that hold go. Thus Christ and the sinner meet.

I come now to apply this in an use of exhortation, in two branches.

*First.* If ever ye would have union and communion with Christ, discern now and believe the grace and good-will of Christ towards you in particular, in the word of his grace which he is sending you this day, viz. the gospel. Do not think that he is overlooking you, however sinful and miserable your case is; but open your eyes and see, and believe him breathing grace and good-will to you in particular.

*Object.* What warrant have I to believe Christ's good-will to me, who am a poor unholy creature? *Ans.* If ye were holy, sanctified by faith, you might believe not only his good-will to, but complacency in you. But as it is, you have a warrant to believe his good-will to you, since he is holding out himself to you to be believed on as one who *justifies the ungodly*, Rom iv. 5. washes the unclean in his own blood, seeks and saves the lost.

1. I ask you, Are ye not warranted to believe the gospel? Mark i. 15. Can ye believe the gospel, and not believe Christ's grace and good-will to sinners of mankind? Surely not; for it is the word of his grace. Then I ask, Can ye think ye are not required to believe more than devils believe? they believe the gospel in the general, and Christ's good-will to sinners of mankind, but not to them: and this is that which fills them with rage against him and them. Therefore ye are required to believe it with particular application to yourselves, namely, Christ's good-will to you.

2. The venom of unbelief lies in making God a liar, not believing the record that God hath given of his Son, 1 John v. 10. But the most desperate unbelievers believe Christ's good-will to sinners in general, but not to them in particular: therefore Christ's good-will to them in particular is a truth, and it is their crying sin and ruin that they will not believe it.

3. It is impossible to believe on Christ for salvation, unless we believe his good-will to us in particular; therefore since ye are warranted for the one, John iii. 16. ye are for the other.

*Object.* But how is it possible for me to see Christ's good-

good will to me, seeing I can neither look into his heart, nor into the decree of election? *Anf.* How do you see an honest man's good-will to you, since you cannot look into his heart, nor see what thoughts he had towards you when you were in the womb? Do you not see it in his words and carriage to you? So you may see Christ's good-will to you in his word of grace and dealing with you. He declares *he came to save the world*, John xii. 47. consequently to save you who are of that society. Is not that good-will to you? —*to save that which was lost*, Luke xix. 10. and you are lost. He is come in the character of *Saviour of the world*, 1 John iv. 14. and therefore he is become your Saviour. He holds out to you his righteousness, his promise to be believed on by you for your salvation. Is not that good-will?

*Object.* But there is not a word of me in particular in the gospel. *Anf.* There is just as much of you in particular in the promise of the gospel, as there is in the curse of the law. John iii 16 "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life," is a proposition as universal as Gal. iii 10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." But the natural conscience of sin helps to believe the latter, but makes it hard to believe the former.

*Object.* But there is one thing I can never get over, and when I would be most serious, then it is sure to be upon me: so I think the Lord has even left it to be a secret sign that he has no good will to me, and that I must perish in the hinder-end. *Anf.* If that thing be the burden of your soul, as it seems to be, you will be making recourse to Christ's blood and Spirit against it; and though you lose many battles, you will certainly be victorious in the war. See the case of the apostle Paul, Rom vii. 21, 24, 25. "I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of

this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The evil design of the divine dispensation in leaving it, is a malicious insinuation of the serpent, Matth. xxv. 24 to discredit the gospel. But the gospel gives you an honourable account of it, 2 Cor. xii 8 9. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, (says Paul) that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." To see a poor creature maintaining an obstinate battle with the serpent, after many a fall rising with the tear in his eye, and falling to it again, declares the power of grace more than his going with an even-up back during the chaining of the enemy, would do.

*Secondly*, If ever ye wou'd have union and communion with Christ, come down then from your heights, and receive Christ breathing good-will to you, trusting on his grace and good will in the word for your salvation. And,

1. Come down from the height of your expectations from the law, your own righteousness, whatever ye can do or suffer: and receive Christ for righteousness, for a rest to your conscience.

2. Come down from the height of your expectations from the creature, and receive Christ for a rest to your heart.

3. *Lastly*, Come down from the height of your jealousies of Christ, by which ye are climbing up to heaven presumptuously, and breaking in to God's secret things, and receive Christ who is down here in his word of grace, breathing good-will to you. Hearken to what the apostle says, "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above): or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach," Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. Make haste down, or ye will

will fall headlong into the pit; for the law will not bear your weight, the creature will fail you, and the sheet of the gospel, wherein Christ's grace and good-will to you is spread out, will be drawn up to heaven, and ye will see no more of it for ever.

# THE
# Distinguishing Characters
## OF
# TRUE BELIEVERS.

## XI. In relation to their entering into Rest in Christ *.

HEBREWS iv. 3.

*For we which have believed do enter into rest.*

OUR Lord Jesus has been inviting you to come to him by believing, and many have professed to give him the hand. Here is a touchstone whereby ye may try, whether ye have believed indeed or not: *For we which have believed do enter into rest.*

In ver. 1. the apostle had exhorted the Hebrews to take heed and fear lest they missed or fell short of the blessed rest, of which they had the promise left them in the gospel. This he enforceth from this consideration, that they were in the same state with respect to it, as the ancient Israelites to Canaan. On the one hand, as the

* The Sermons on this subject were preached at Ettrick, begun June 18. 1727. the Lord's day immediately following the administration of the Lord's supper there.

the Israelites had the promise of Canaan, but lost it through their not believing the promise, ver. 2 ; so we have the gospel, the promise of the spiritual rest ; but if we believe not, we will never enter into it, but fall as the body of Israel in the wilderness. On the other hand, as Caleb and Joshua who believed the promise of Canaan, did enter into it ; so we believers do enter into the spiritual rest. Thus you see the connection of the text with the two preceding verses.

In the words we have two things to be considered.

1. A sweet experience declared, *We do enter into rest.* It is an experience of a spiritual and heavenly benefit ; whereof Caleb and Joshua's experience was the type, Josh. xiv. And here consider,

(1.) The benefit experienced ; that is, *rest.* Rest is a sweet thing, as all weary labourers do know. But of all rest soul-rest is the sweetest ; and such is this. The rest here meant is the rest held forth in the promise of the gospel, ver 1, 2. And if ye ask where it is found ? it is not in heaven only, for the believer enters into it now : but it is in Christ, whether in earth or heaven. This appears from the sinner's entering into it by faith, the nature of the rest, ver. 10 the apostle's opposing believers partaking of Christ, to unbelievers losing their part in Canaan, chap. iii 14. and is agreeable to the promise of the gospel, Matth xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

(2.) The experience of that benefit, *We do enter.* He says not, We *shall* enter, viz at death ; but in the present time, We *do* enter. The believer's rest is not altogether put off to another life. It is not complete indeed, till we come to heaven ; but it is begun here, we are entering into it, and do enter. And the very entrance of the rest is sweet.

2. The parties in whose name this experience is declared, *We which have believed,* viz in Christ. Unbelievers still remain in their restless condition, but faith in Christ lays the soul to rest. Christ is the resting-

place

place of poor ſinners; and faith uniting the ſoul to Chriſt, the ſoul enters into reſt in him.

The words afford the following doctrine.

DOCT. They who have truly believed in Chriſt, do enter into reſt in him.

Here I ſhall,

I. Shew who they are that have truly believed.

II. Conſider the entering of thoſe that have believed into reſt in Jeſus Chriſt.

III. Apply the whole.

I. I am to ſhew who they are that have truly believed. I am not here to enter on the nature of faith at large; only with a view to the goſpel-meſſage ſent you laſt day, I am to ſhew who have believed in two particulars.

*Firſt*, They who have believed, have believed the grace and good will of Chriſt to them in particular, held forth in his word of grace to them, viz. a good-will to ſave them from ſin and wrath. Behold the echo of the believing ſoul to the word of grace, 1 Tim. i 15. "This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners; of whom I am chief." Chriſt has been at much pains to ſhew his good-will to you and every one of you in particular: I aſk you, Do ye now believe it? or are ye not as yet convinced of it? There are three ſorts of unbelievers in this point.

1. Thoſe who do not believe what the goſpel holds out as good-will, to be good-will to them. Such unbelievers are all carnally ſecure ſinners, unwilling to part with their luſts; Jer. ii. 25. "Thou ſaidſt, There is no hope. No, for I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go." If Chriſt in his goſpel ſhould ſhew a good-will to make them healthy, and wealthy, and well in the world, they could believe that to be good-will to them; or if he could reſtrict his good-will to the keeping

ing them out of hell, when they die. But all that is said of good will to them otherwise, they look on as idle tales, Psal iv. 6. And so they treat as airy notions, what they have no heart for, Prov xvii 16. Nay, when they look on it in earnest, they take it for ill-will, to rob them of what they have most delight in. Rom. viii 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Gal iv 16 "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

2 Those who do not believe the grace and good-will of Christ to them to be pure grace and good-will. Such unbelievers are all unhumbled souls: they have never got a true sight of their own exceeding sinfulness and utter unworthiness; so it is easy for them to believe Christ's good will to them, for they never saw any difficulty in that, *How shall I put thee among the children?* But then it is not grace and good-will, but due good-will to them, that they believe: and that is not divine faith, Rom iv 4, 5, 16 wrought by the Spirit.

3. Those who do see their own sinfulness, that they cannot see nor believe Christ's grace and good-will to them. Such unbelievers are awakened sinners, on whom the law has its effect, but not the gospel, Isa liii. 1. They have a jealousy of Christ reigning in them, that they cannot believe that ever his heart can be towards them. And so however they may believe the truth of the gospel as to others, they believe it not with respect to themselves.

Now all these are unbelievers, who have not entered into rest, but continue restless. They do not believe the gospel, receive not Christ's testimony, John iii 32. make God a liar, 1 John v. 10, 11. They go no farther in their belief of the gospel than devils, Mark i. 24, 25.

*Quest.* By what characters may they be known, who have believed in this point?

*Ans.* 1. They have believed Christ's grace and good-will to them, over the belly of staring guilt, and felt unworthiness, Luke xv. 18. Convinced that the Lord would

would have been just, and done them no wrong, to have set himself against them for ever; they have yet believed his unhired good-will to them held forth in his word of grace. So their faith stands on the foot of mere grace, pure grace.

2. They have believed his grace and good-will towards the drawing them out of the miry clay of their sinfulness, as well as out from the rolling waves of guilt, the curse, and eternal wrath. For this is the good-will of Christ testified in the gospel, Matth i. 21. *He shall save his people from their sins;* and faith believes that good-will as held forth in the gospel. So they reckon it good-will to them, that they be made holy, that the power of sin be broken in them, and believe such a good-will to them in Christ Jesus. They would as fain be sanctified, as one would be freed from his running sores, and believe the great Physician's good-will to their cure, Micah vii 19 "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

3. The only foundation of their belief of it, is the faithfulness of God in his word of grace, Gal iii. 2. "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirt by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" They see so much of their own vileness, that if men or angels had said it, they could not have believed it: but because they see God himself has said it, they cannot but believe it. The Spirit of God has demonstrated to them Christ's good-will in the word of the gospel, and that that word is God's own word: so they are overcome into a belief of it. So the word of the gospel is the anchor of their souls, which they hold by alone, whatever waves come on them to beat them off from that their belief.

4. *Lastly*, They have betaken themselves to the grace and good-will of Christ in his word of grace, and laid all their weight over upon it. Whatever jealousies of Christ's good-will were hanging about them, proceeding

ceeding from conscience of guilt, and Satan's subtil insinuations; they have broke through them all, and cast themselves into the arms of free grace, Mark ix. 34. This brings to

The *Second* particular, They who have believed, have believed on Christ as their own Saviour for life and salvation to them, Acts xv. 11. "We believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." Thus believing the Son, and believing on the Son, believing the gospel, and receiving and resting on Christ, are inseparably connected, John iii. 36. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." They who believe the gospel, testifying Christ's grace and good-will to them in particular, cannot but receive and rest on Christ breathing that good-will towards them; as you see was exemplified in Zaccheus, Luke xix. 6. *He made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.* Their reigning jealousy being cured by their faith of the word of his grace, they cannot but throw themselves into the arms of his grace, and embrace him as their all.

This believing lies precisely in trusting on him as our Saviour: the sinner trusting to the report of his good-will to him, trusts on him accordingly for all, Is. xxvi. 4. Psal. ii. *ult.* And so he,

1. Commits himself to him, as one doth quietly commit himself to an able person, whose good-will to him he believes, Psal. x. 14. *The poor committeth himself unto thee*, Heb. *leaves upon thee*. The sinner sees his case in itself to be desperate, but hearing of the Saviour able to save to the uttermost, and believing his good-will to him, commits and rolls himself on him

2. He expects salvation from him according to the word of his grace, Acts xv. 11. forecited. For the gospel is a promise held forth to sinners to be believed, a promise of life and salvation, Heb iv. 1.; and faith trusting the promise, expects the accomplishment of it.

And the sinner believing on Christ, betakes himself to him only, wholly, and for ever.

(1.) He

(1.) He renounces utterly all expectations of reſt to his conſcience from the law, and betakes himſelf to a crucified Chriſt for it, Phil. iii. 3. All his doings and ſufferings are quitted in point of confidence in them before the Lord; and he lays his weight allenarly on the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt. The infinity of the perſon perſuades him of the efficacy of theſe for acceptance, and the word of promiſe ſatisfies him of Chriſt's good-will to apply them to him.

(2.) He renounces utterly all expectations of reſt to his heart from the world, and his luſts, and betakes himſelf to a full Chriſt for it, Jer. xvi 19. The world has appeared vain and empty, it has given the man many diſappointments, and he will truſt it no more; he ſays, There is no hope from that quarter. His ſinful luſts have appeared deceitful; looking for a reſt in them, he has found himſelf as among lions dens, and on mountains of leopards. Wherefore he takes Chriſt for a reſt to his reſtleſs heart, for all and inſtead of all: Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee."

Thus the ſinner believing does enter into reſt, reſts in Chriſt as his choice, never to make another choice, to take any perſon or thing in his ſtead; reſts in him as a complete portion, ſenſible that there is enough in him to make him happy.

II. I ſhall conſider the entering of thoſe that have believed into reſt in Jeſus Chriſt. And herein I ſhall ſhew,

1. What is ſuppoſed in that thoſe who have believed do enter into reſt.

2. What is that reſt in Chriſt which they do enter into.

3. What is the import of their entering into that reſt in Chriſt.

4. How the ſoul is entered into reſt in the way of believing.

FIRST, I am to ſhew what is ſuppoſed in that thoſe who have believed do enter into reſt.

*Firſt*, Thoſe who have not believed, are in a ſtate of reſtleſſneſs. Unbelievers are reſtleſs creatures, Iſ. lvii. 20. Till the ſoul come to Chriſt, it can never get true reſt: one may take reſt as well on the top of a maſt, as get it in an ungodly, unregenerate, unconverted ſtate Thoſe out of Chriſt have,

1. A reſtleſs ſtation, an inſecure ſtanding, Deut. xxviii. 65. 66. "And among theſe nations ſhalt thou find no eaſe, neither ſhall the ſole of thy foot have reſt: but the Lord ſhall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and ſorrow of mind. And thy life ſhall hang in doubt before thee, and thou ſhalt fear day and night, and ſhalt have none aſſurance of thy life." It is by faith only that one's feet come to be ſet on a rock. Sinners out of Chriſt are like thoſe who are ſtanding on the earth quaking under them, like thoſe who are leaning on a broken reed: for how can they have ſure footing, who are lying open to the wrath of God, and are every moment in hazard of dropping into the pit? John iii *ult.*

2. A reſtleſs labouring, Matth xi. 28. Their reigning luſts keep them always buſy; for they have many mouths to feed, many taſk-maſters to pleaſe, who are under the command of unmortified luſts, Jer ix 5. They have hard work to ſqueeze their ſatisfaction out of the huſks of the empty creation, Hab. ii. 13 And if conſcience is awakened, they have hard labour, in the fiery region of the law, to keep pace with it, and work a righteouſneſs in which they may ſtand before a juſt God, Rom x 3 It is a reſtleſs labouring, for they can never reach the end of their work; for reigning luſts will never ceaſe craving, the creature will never ſatisfy, nor the law juſtify.

3. A reſtleſs wandering. God is the place, the reſting place of the ſoul, Pſal. xc. 1. "Lord, thou haſt been our dwelling-place in all generations." Adam and all his poſterity in him left this place; ſo the ſoul not returned to God by Chriſt, is in a wandering ſtate, Prov. xxvii. 8. "As a bird that wandereth from her neſt;

(2.) A reſt of diſcovery, diſcovering the object ſufficneſt; ſo is a man that wandereth from his place." 1 Pet. ii. *ult.* They are *as ſheep going aſtray.* Look as the Iſraelites wandered forty years in the wilderneſs, till they were conſumed; ſo the ſoul out of Chriſt having loſt God, has no certain reſting-place, but wanders in the wilderneſs of ſin, from one luſt to another; of the empty creation, from one creature to another; of Sinai, from one legal performance to another; like the great wanderer the devil, Matth. xii. 43. Only they who believe, like Caleb and Joſhua, do enter into reſt.

4 A reſtleſs burden-bearing, Matth xi. 28. There is a load of guilt on them, which they cannot ſhake off, John viii. 24 —of ſervitude to reigning luſts, which they cannot free themſelves of, 2 Tim iii. 6.—of law-duties bound on them under the pain of the curſe, while it has no promiſe of ſtrength wherewith to perform them, which they can neither bear nor be freed from, Gal iv. 24, 25, 26.—of curſes, which they are continually increaſing, Gal. iii. 10.—and of wrath lying on them, John iii *ult.* and heaped up, Rom ii. 5.

5. *Laſtly*, A reſtleſs eternal ſtate abiding them, 2 Theſſ i. 7, 8, 9. They that take not up their reſt in Chriſt now, will have no reſt hereafter: for *their worm will never die, nor their fire be quenched* As they have no ſolid reſt in this world, they will have no reſt at all in the other world.

*Secondly* Reſtleſs ſouls may be laid to reſt in Jeſus Chriſt, Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt" The whole race of mankind being put off their reſt by Adam's fall, whoſo will may return to their reſt in Chriſt, by him returning to God. For the reſt that men are ſeeking, but cannot get in their luſts, in the creature, and in the law, may be found in Chriſt. In him the ſoul may ſweetly repoſe itſelf; being ſafe from the fear of evil, and having all in him to anſwer its needs.

*Laſtly*, It is by faith the reſtleſs ſoul is laid to reſt in Chriſt, Rom. xv. 13. "Now the God of hope fill you

with all joy and peace in believing." The world was put off, and is kept off its reſt, by the diſturbance given by the tempter: he goes about, and will let none of them reſt, that he can get hindered. God has ſent us the goſpel, as a ſong to ſing poor ſinners to reſt in a Saviour. Pſal. xxxvii 7.; and it is ſo efficacious for that end, that all that hear it by faith, are really laid to reſt in him, though they had been raging like madmen, as Manaſſeh and Paul.

SECONDLY, I proceed to ſhew what is that reſt in Chriſt, which they who do believe enter into It is twofold, ſpiritual and heavenly, initial and complete.

*Firſt.* They who have believed, do enter into ſpiritual reſt, which is their initial or begun reſt. Though they ſhould get little more reſt for their bodies, till they reſt in the grave; they enter into ſoul-reſt, Matth xi 29. they get reſt for their ſouls in Chriſt. And none that knows what ſoul-trouble is, but they will value it more than any reſt out of heaven. And they enter into,

1. A reſt of the underſtanding. The mind of man is a reſtleſs thing; and though it is always ſeeking and ſearching, it can never find where to reſt, till the ſoul come to Chriſt, and there it comes to the utmoſt point, and ſo reſts. Now the minds of thoſe that have believed, do enter into,

(1.) A reſt of perſuaſion and aſſurance of the truth of the goſpel. 1 Theſſ i. 5. "Our goſpel came not unto you in word only, but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance." There is a root of Atheiſm and incredulity in the minds of men by nature: the goſpel is brought to them, but they cannot believe it, Iſ. liii 1. It is enforced upon them with many clear arguments, ready to captivate their aſſent: but ſtill at beſt they remain fluctuating about it; ſometimes they are almoſt perſuaded, and anon the vain mind recoils. Hence they are here and there in their reſolutions, courſe of life, &c. Thus they remain reſtleſs in their minds about it, till the Spirit demonſtrating it, works faith in them: and then they reſt aſſured of it, as of what they ſee and feel. (2.) A

cient to make men happy. The whole blind world is in queſt of that, and they are rambling up and down in great confuſion ſeeking it; while they know not what it is. One runs to the profits, others to the pleaſures of the world for it; but can never find it in the whole round of the creation to which they go for it. But Chriſt being ſeen by an eye of faith, the mind is at reſt from the weary ſearch: the ſoul has found the one pearl, and cries out, I have found, I need ſeek no farther, John i. 45 here is enough for me.

(3) A reſt of the higheſt eſtimation, Pſal lxxiii 25. forecited Natural men are in a conſtant hurry this way, they never reſt in this point. They will moſt eſteem that to-day, which they will loath and think very little of to-morrow. What we had the higheſt value for in infancy, we care not for in childhood; in childhood, we deſpiſe in youth, &c In a word, natural men are all their days like children, that value the neweſt toy moſt. But when men believe, the higheſt eſtimation is fixed on Chriſt, 1 Pet. ii 7. *Unto you which believe he is precious*: and though thouſands of objects come after him, he preſerves his tranſcendent excellency in the believer's eyes. His mind is at reſt there, though the greateſt hardſhips come with him, their higheſt value for him is not ſunk

2. A reſt of the will The will is a reſtleſs faculty of the ſoul; it goes hither and thither, and can never be brought to reſt, till the ſoul comes to Chriſt. *Unſtable as water*, may be its motto, for what he wills to-day, he will not to-morrow. But the will of thoſe who have believed doth enter into,

(1) A reſt of full liking to and contentedneſs with Chriſt, Pſal. cx 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* The unbeliever never ſaw the object in which he could ſo reſt. However pleaſed he was with it, it wanted ſtill ſome one thing or other to him; the creature, in itſelf; and Chriſt himſelf, with reſpect to their mind Hence he could never find reſt to his will. But they who believe do enter into this reſt; they have

at length fallen on an object that fully pleaseth them; there is nothing in him which they would have away, and there is nothing out of him that they would have in, Cant v. *ult. He is altogether lovely.*

(2) A rest of chief design and purpose, namely, to partake of Christ, and enjoy God in him, which is man's chief end, Psal lxxiii 25. Unbelievers are still changing their particular chief designs, they alter their minds in them, and cannot rest: but faith sets the soul to rest in *one thing*, which it will chiefly pursue while breath lasts, Psal xxvii. 4 and what that is, the apostle tells, Phil iii. 8 "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ"

(3.) A rest of final choice, Psal. lxxiii. 25. The soul that is out of Christ is light of conceit, and given to changes: but they that have believed have made their choice, and closed their eyes never to chuse another, acquiescing in the choice of Christ for a portion Hence they deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, as a woman espoused to a husband can no more admit the addresses of former suitors, Tit. ii. 12. 13.

3. A rest of the conscience A disturbed conscience is a heavy companion, Prov. xviii 14 and there is no sound rest for it, but in Christ. The consciences of some are asleep, yea those of some are seared; but that is no kindly rest for them. They will certainly be awakened sooner or later, and conscience makes some frightful starts in that sleep. The awakened conscience smarts sore as by a deep wound, Acts ii. 37. and that wound's becoming incurable, is the gnawing worm in in hell. The first way men go for rest in this case is to the law, making a healing plaister of their duties to apply to their sore: but there is no rest there, the thunder of its curses being redoubled But the consciences of those who have believed, do enter into,

(1.) A rest of ease, Rom. xv. 13. The soul that was

was in a storm before, comes to enjoy a calm by believing, just according to the measure of believing. In the awakened fired conscience, guilt ferments, and casts it into a fever; by believing the soul gets the conscience purged, Heb ix. 14 and so there is a cool of that fever, chap. x. 2. Faith brings the tossed soul to an anchor in Christ.

(2.) A rest of refreshment, comfort, and establishment: there is not only *peace*, but *joy in believing*, according to the measure thereof, Rom. xv. 13 The same conscience that stung the man before, chears him now; that brought the dread of God as an enemy, brings in kindly thoughts of God through Christ, finding kindly rest in the righteousness of a Redeemer apprehended by faith.

Indeed so far as faith is mixed with doubting, the rest will be mixed with unquietness. And if faith were perfect, the rest would be perfect too. But if the hand of faith tremble, taking and holding the grip, so much will be wanting of the ease and comfort of conscience.

4. A rest of heart and affections, Psal. cxvi. 7. This is a rest the soul can never find till it come to Christ: for still the heart of man is craving, at the rate the whole creation cannot answer it, and therefore is kept restless. But the hearts of those who have believed, do enter into,

(1) A rest of satisfaction, Phil. iv 18. The soul being by faith set on the breasts of the divine consolations, has enough, Gen. xxxiii. 11. It finds Christ an object commensurable to its boundless desires, nothing to be desired without him, nothing beyond him, Psal. lxxiii. 25. The whole compass of worldly comforts could never match the heart; there was still something wanting which the heart desired. But now it is matched in a satisfying object.

(2) A rest of settled abode, Psal xc. 1. so that it goes no more abroad, as it was wont, among the creatures for satisfaction, John iv. 14. Having Christ, it has enough within itself, Prov. xiv 14. and therefore can

rest

rest satisfied even when the streams abroad are dried up, Hab. iii. 17, 18. why? because the fountain is with it. Christ, as the husband of the soul, becomes a covering of its eyes.

(3) A rest of holy calmness, Matth. xi. 29. While the soul is out of Christ, the heart and affections are like a troubled sea: unmortified lusts and passions fight therein like contrary winds blowing; one passion drives the heart this way, anon another comes and drives it that way, Jam. iv 1. But the soul believing in Christ, the turbulent rout of unruly lusts is cashiered, and the soul gets a cool of that fever, Rom. vi 14 *Sin shall not have dominion over you.* Then is fulfilled that promise, Isa xi 6. *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.*

(4) A rest of holy security as to the issue of all that concerns them, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know, (says Paul.) whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Faith brings the news from heaven, on all events, that all will be well in the end. Luther, when any cloud of troubles appeared to be gathering, used to say, "Come let us sing the 46th psalm" For faith can make a rest in the midst of trouble, building its nest in the promise, John xvi. *ult.* "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"

And thus the soul ceaseth from its own works, Heb. iv. 10 and hath a spiritual sabbath begun.

*Secondly*, Those who have believed, do enter into heavenly rest at length. This is the rest completed. The grave is made a resting-place for their bodies for a while; but the soul rests in Abraham's bosom at death till the resurrection. And then soul and body together will have an everlasting complete rest there together. All I shall say of it is in these two things.

1. All

1. All the mixture of disquiet and uneasiness that remains in the rest of believers here, shall then be taken away. The soul-rest in Christ here is not without some mixture of disquiet, because of the imperfection of faith. There is a remaining darkness in their minds, and rebellion in their will: the rest of their conscience in Christ may be assaulted with doubts and fears; and the rest of their hearts in him interrupted by the sallies of corruption. But according to the gospel, God judgeth of them according to the bent of their soul.

2. The rest begun here shall be screwed up to a height there. Their minds being enlightened with the light of glory, their wills perfected in holiness, their consciences quieted by the decisive sentence from the tribunal, and their hearts satisfied with full enjoyment, will give them a more profound rest in Christ than we can imagine.

THIRDLY, I proceed to shew what is the import of their entering into that rest in Christ. It imports,

1. Sinners before they believe have a toiled restless uneasy life of it, Matth. xi. 28. No wonder, for they are God's enemies, the law's criminals, sin's slaves, and Satan's drudges. In vain do men reject religion, because it will not suffer them to be idle: for the servants of sin are as busy as the servants of God can be for their hearts. The watch goes as fast when wrong, as when right: and the Lord does not put more, but other work in people's hands. The soul of man is always doing and active, right or wrong.

2. All that believe are wearied, outwearied people, that find they need rest, and would fain have it, Isa. xxviii 12. *This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing.* Never a soul will come to Christ, till it be so wearied, that its legs are able to carry it no further, Jer. ii. 24 So being quite tired out, it lies down at his door. They are outwearied of the vain world; it has disappointed them so often, that they say, *There is no hope.* They are outwearied

wearied of their deceitful lusts, for they find there is no satisfying of them. They see there is no rest for them there. If ye were never thus wearied, ye have never yet entered into this rest.

3. They see and believe there is a rest in Christ for them. The gospel is *a word in season to the weary*, Isa. l. 4 there it is they *find rest to their souls*, Matth. xi. 28. They see Christ *as the shadow of a great rock in the weary land*, and conclude, that if they can get there, they will get rest. It is the Spirit of God that discovers Christ as a resting-place for the sinner; for the soul remaining in its natural blindness, is so far from it, that it represents Christ in quite contrary colours.

4. They come to him as a resting-place, by believing on him, Matth. xi. 28. Isa xi. 10. They throw themselves into the arms of his grace, take hold of his covenant, and receive him for their eternal resting-place, to abide in him for ever, desiring nothing without or beyond him, Psal. lxxiii. 25 as having all in him for their safety and provision, Psal cxlii. 5. So the weary soul takes up its lodging in Christ, saying, All my wants be on thee.

5 They compose themselves for, and set themselves to rest in him, Psal. cxvi. 7. They seek their rest in him, as a wearied man gone to bed seeks rest there. They give over seeking rest, either to their consciences in the law, or to their hearts in the world, or their wills in their lusts: but what they were seeking before in all these, they seek now in Christ alone, Psal. xlv. 10.

6 They are active to get rest in Christ. Entering speaks activity, and that lies in the exercise of faith. They who have believed, do by believing enter into rest: by the first act of faith the soul is brought into the resting-place, by the continued actings of faith the soul enters into rest in him So faith is called *a resting on the Lord*, 2 Chron xiv. 11 *in the Lord*, Psal. xxxvii 7.

And

And as far as the exerciſe of faith is intermitted, ſo far the entering into reſt in Chriſt is interrupted.

7. They find a begun reſt, but not complete; they are entered into it; though they are not yet come to the perfection of it, yet they are in the way to it. Such is the difference betwixt the reſt of faith, and the reſt of ſight and ſenſe. Hence they are eaſily diſturbed, too eaſily put off their reſt by temptations and trials; whereas in heaven they can be no more diſturbed in the leaſt.

8. *Laſtly*, The believer all his life long here, is but entering into that reſt: *We do enter*. The Iſraelites were forty years a-entering into Canaan, after they came out of Egypt. And from the moment of the firſt believing, till the ſoul comes to glory, it is but entering into reſt; entering being but an initial and imperfect action. Hence they that have come to Chriſt, are ſtill ſaid to be *coming*, 1 Pet. ii. 4. But at length they ſhall have it full and complete.

FOURTHLY, I come now to ſhew how the ſoul is entered into reſt in the way of believing, or the influence of faith to bring and lay the ſoul to reſt. This is a myſtery to the blind world: no body can truly know the reſt of the ſoul in Chriſt, but thoſe that have experienced it; nor the influence of faith that way, but thoſe that have felt it; though they may talk rationally about it, and preach it.

1. Faith diſcovers Chriſt as the only object commenſurable to the deſires of the ſoul, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. Men employ the eyes in their head to diſcover among the creatures ſomething they may reſt in; the eyes of their mind, and theſe go to what they never ſaw, and dreſs up a thouſand airy nothings to themſelves: but all theſe leave the man diſappointed, ſo that he muſt go on to a new ſearch, and ſo can never reſt. But the eye of faith beholds through the glaſs of the goſpel Chriſt as ſuch an object, a full and complete match for the heart; ſo that the man ſees he needs ſeek no farther, and ſo he reſts.

2. Faith takes poſſeſſion of Chriſt, as ſuch an object offered

offered to the ſoul; knits with him in a marriage-covenant, by truſting on him for all to itſelf, John i. 12. Pſal. ii. *ult.* So it enters the ſoul to reſt, as a wife in the houſe of her huſband, who has now made her final choice The man that was ſeeking goodly pearls, having diſcovered the one pearl, purchaſes that, and ſeeks no more, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. A beggar may ſee an eſtate, which, if he had it, would be enough for him; but that ſight cannot cauſe him go over his begging: but if one ſhould make it over to him, and he thereupon takes poſſeſſion, he will reſt, and beg no more.

3. Faith draws the ſting of guilt out of the conſcience, and ſo enters the ſoul to reſt, Rom. iii. 24. 25. Lay a man down in the ſofteſt bed, the quieteſt room, a thorn ſticking in his finger, he cannot reſt till the thorn be pulled out. Guilt is a thorn in the conſcience; but faith applying the blood of Chriſt to the wound, the thorn is drawn out, Heb. ix. 14. It caſt him in a ſpiritual fever, but he is healed, Iſa xxxiii. *ult.*

4 Faith ſets the ſoul in ſafety, Prov. i. *ult.* If a man have never ſo many conveniencies for reſting, but ſees himſelf ſtill in danger of his life, how can he reſt? Job xi 18. In ſuch danger are all unbelievers, and they can have no reſt, but when the dead ſleep is in their eye. But as ſoon as the ſoul believes, all is ſafe, Rom. viii. 1. Faith brings the ſoul under the covert of blood, where not a drop of wrath can paſs; and within the bond of the covenant of peace, where the noiſe of war is heard no more. Pardon and peace give ſafety for quiet reſt.

5. Faith mortifies and breaks the power of reigning luſts, Acts xv. 9. While they abide in their force, there can be no reſt, more than in the troubled ſea: but faith brings a calm, mortifying thoſe luſts, that fight in and againſt the ſoul. Faith knitting the ſoul to Chriſt as the head, in whom is lodged the fulneſs of the Spirit of holineſs, cannot miſs of ſanctifying influence, Acts xxvi 18. And the more vigorous and ſtrong faith is, the virtue of the death of Chriſt for the death of luſts

is.

is the more partaken of Hence it brings the soul to rest. freeing it from the hellish noise that unmortified lusts were wont to make; and from the violent tosses that they gave the soul among them, so that it could not rest.

6. Faith cures the soul of the dog-like appetite that painful hunger and thirst which the eating of the forbidden fruit left in all mankind Lay one never so soft, if hunger be gnawing him, and thirst scorching him, he cannot rest Such is the case of all unbelievers, they are hungerring and thirsting for satisfaction from the creature: they eat of the husks, but they are never satisfied; they drink of the puddle waters, but their thirst is not quenched. Hence Christ calls them to him, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness," Is. lv. 1, 2. And faith taking of the hidden manna, the waters of like, that hunger and thirst is cured, John. iv. 14 and the soul rests.

7. Faith contracts the desires of the soul into one point, Psal. xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." The unbeliever's heart is divided, nay it is split in a thousand pieces as it were; for many are the cravings of the heart naturally: but the thing necessary for the soul is but one, Luke x *ult. One thing is needful.* He that lies down wanting many things to make him easy, how can he rest when his mind is going out on one want after another? Faith makes the desires to be contracted into this one, that the soul may rest in Christ.

8. Faith sees it has a fulness in Christ enough to answer all its needs; and hence the language thereof is,

*I have all, and abound,* Phil. iv. 18. Preſſing wants which one knows not of ſupply for, breed anxiety, and anxiety diſturbs and keeps from reſt: but faith diſcerning a full ſupply for the man in Chriſt, lays him to reſt: There is *the fulneſs of a Godhead in him,* and ſo they are *complete in him,* Col. ii. 9, 10. Though a man have nothing in hand to anſwer the demands of his creditors, if he has bills and bonds of a friend of his, to whom he can never come wrong, he is eaſy: ſo the ſoul, whatever its wants be, knowing it has enough in Chriſt, reſts ſatisfied that they ſhall all be ſupplied out of his exuberant fulneſs.

9. *Laſtly,* Faith leaves all on Chriſt, Pſal. x. 14. *The poor leaveth himſelf on thee,* Heb. Hannah was very reſtleſs a while, but praying in faith, and leaving her caſe to the Lord, ſhe was eaſy, 1 Sam. i. 18. Believers are travelling through the wilderneſs, but they have a guide whom they can truſt, and that makes them eaſy, Phil. iv. 6, 7. The believer ſometimes racks and diſtreſſes himſelf, upon this and the other ſtrait and difficulty; and many unbelieving hows and whys go thro' his heart; and he is like a man that in a dark and pathleſs wilderneſs has loſt ſight of his guide: but when the eye of faith clears, all theſe are ſilenced; and fixing on a promiſe, he gets a cool of that fever: he truſts on the power, wiſdom, and truth of Chriſt.

I ſhall now, in the laſt place, apply this ſubject in ſome practical uſes.

Use I. of information. Hence learn,

1. That Jeſus Chriſt is a reſting-place for the weary, Matth. xi. 28. By faith the ſoul comes to him, and there finds a reſt. What reſt Noah found in the ark, when the deluge was on the earth; the man-ſlayer in the city of refuge, otherwiſe in hazard of his life; the Iſraelites in Canaan after their bondage in Egypt; that Jeſus Chriſt will give to believers in him, Iſa. xi. 10. *To it ſhall the Gentiles ſeek, and his reſt ſhall be glorious.*

2. True

2. True faith is an active and efficacious thing. It lays the restless soul to rest. It is efficacious on the conscience, and heart, and all the faculties of the soul: and therefore cannot but be so on the life too. Gal v. 6. *Faith worketh by love.* That faith which is idle and inefficacious, making no change on the heart and life, is but dead, and will leave the soul in death Jam. ii 17: True faith uniting the soul to Christ the fountain of life, partakes of the Spirit of life in him, and so is a working faith.

3 The way of believing is the way to solid rest All weary souls should take this way, so should they attain the rest they would fain have This is the way to the wilderness rest, where the soul rests in Christ amidst all the tosses of a present life. John xvi *ult.* and to the heavenly rest, where they shall have a profound peace, not to be disturbed any more, Rev. xxi. 25.

4. Those who have believed, may see what course to take at any time when their rest is disturbed. They must renew the actings of faith on Christ. This is a sovereign remedy, (1) When their inward peace of conscience is marred, through a sense of unpardoned guilt lying on them The same faith that applying the blood of Christ to the soul, drew the sting out of the conscience before, will do the same again. (2.) When corruption stirring and prevailing in the soul, disturbs its rest. Nothing is more effectual to quench the hellish fire blown up in the heart, than the exercise of faith, Acts xv. 9. And at no time is the exercise of faith out of season, Psal. lxii 8. *Trust in him at all times*, particularly at such a time, saying with David, Psal lxv. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* (3) When one is under a pressure of outward trouble, faith will carry the soul to a hiding-place, Isa. xxxii. 2. and relieving the soul by the comfort of the promise, will make it go easily under the burden.

Use II. of trial. Hereby ye may try whether ye have truly believed in Christ or not; for they who have

believed do enter into rest in him And by this touchstone we may sort the hearers of the gospel.

1. Those who have never yet found the object, in which their heart could take up its eternal rest, but are still seeking it among the creatures, are unbelievers. That is an evidence, they are in their natural state, still wandering on the mountains of vanity, and Christ has never been discovered savingly to them, John iv. 10.

On the other hand, those who have seen such a transcendent glory and excellency in Christ, as has put an end to their searching out for a satisfying object, and brought them to make a final choice of Christ as fully satisfying, they are true believers. For they are come to a point in the main thing, Psal. lxxiii. 25; they have found the one pearl, else they had not given over their former vain search.

2. Those whose pretended closing with Christ has never made them cease from their own works, but they are still living the loose, licentious, carnal life they led before, are unbelievers, Heb. iv. 10. They who continue in the devil's drudgery, yielding still their members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, are not entering into this holy rest, but abiding at their restless labour.

But such as having closed with Christ have given over their former work, dying unto sin, and living to God as those that are alive from the dead, are true believers. Their faith is proved true, as being a fountain of sanctification. Their lives are actually purged from the gross pollutions of the world, whereby they differ from the profane; and they are wrestling against the pollutions of the heart, whereby they differ from hypocrites, 1 John iii 3 Psal xxiv. 3, 4.

3. Those who fall away from Christ in heart or life, have not truly believed, 1 John ii. 19. There are branches in Christ that rest not in him, but are taken away, because they never truly knit with him, John xv 2. (1.) There is a falling away from Christ in heart; that is,

is, when those who have pretended to yield themselves to the Lord, keep up their profession, and a form of duties, to satisfy their consciences; but in the mean time it is the vain world and their deceitful lusts whence they fetch all their satisfaction to their hearts, like those, Isa iv. 1 who said, *We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.* (2) In life and conversation, which readily follows the other, so that they return by degrees to their former sinful courses; turning as loose and licentious as ever, if not more so. Of these it is said, that *it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them*, &c. 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22.

But those who continue with Christ in heart and life, are true believers, John viii. 31. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" Such a continuance argues them to have knit with the stock; the storms blow, but they are founded on the rock, therefore they stand. Their continuance with him shews, they have entered into rest in him.

*Case.* But alas! my heart continues very restless, and ill to guide; it is unstable as water, I cannot get it to rest in Christ as I would have it. *Ans.* What of that rest is obtained here is an entering into it, a beginning of it, and endeavour after it, rather than a full rest. The Christian is in that case rather like one that is going to sleep that has his startings now and then, than like one who is found asleep. Though he cannot rest as he would desire in Christ, yet still he abides within the resting-place, does not turn his back on Christ, and take up his rest in the world and his lusts again; like a sick man who may change many seats, yet still abides within his own house, and goes not abroad leaving it. So the Christian is habitually, and in respect of endeavour, resting in Christ: and the Lord will reckon that a true rest in him, 2 Cor. viii. 12. "For if there be

be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Psal xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." No body while here wants their wandering fits: but happy they who are like the dove sent out of the ark, ever restless till she came back; not like the raven, who finding carrion to feed on, returned no more.

USE III of exhortation. Ye who profess to have believed in Christ, rest in him, and so evidence your faith. For motives, consider,

1 There is no need ye should go to any other quarter for what ye need: *For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*, Col i. 19 There is nothing ye can want, but ye have it in him; *Thou art my refuge*, says David, *and my portion in the land of the living*, Psal cxlii 5 There is no case ye can be in, but there is a suitable remedy for it in him. He that rests in Christ, having Christ in him, has all within himself.

2. There is no true rest to be found out of Christ, John vi. 67, 68. He is the life, and without him there is nothing but death; he is all in all, and without him there is nothing but emptiness; he is the rest, and without him there is nothing but wandering.

3. It dishonours him highly not to rest in him. It gives out an ill report of him to the world, whereby his name may be blasphemed, as if there were not enough in him to satisfy in all cases. It is such an indignity as it would be to a husband, that his spouse were hanging about the doors of her former suitors.

4 Your not resting in him will evidence your hypocrisy: *Will he delight himself in the Almighty?* says Job of the hypocrite; *Will he always call upon God?* Job xxvii. 10 Ye will be apostates and backsliders, whose later end will be worse than the beginning; for the

the unclean ſpirit returning comes with ſeven devils worſe than himſelf

5. *Laſtly*, Reſt in him now, and ye ſhall reſt with him for ever: but if ye forſake him, he will caſt you off, and ye will fall there where there is no reſt for the ages of eternity. And it will aggravate your condemnation, that ye might have been well, if ye could but have reſted in Chriſt.

*F I N I S.*

# ADVERTISEMENT.

THE foregoing SERMONS, and the SOLILOQUY prefixed, were carefully transcribed from the originals in the author's hand-writing, and exactly compared with them in the course of printing; so that they are the genuine composition of the great man whose name they bear. The transcriber is happy in having been concerned in ushering into the world most of his posthumous pieces, especially that great work of this author, entitled, *An illustration of the Doctrines of the Christian Religion, on the plan of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism*, the first volume of which is just published.

The SOLILOQUY was written the same year that Mr. BOSTON was ordained to the office of the holy ministry, and exhibits a very amiable picture of him as a Christian and a preacher. Happy were it for the world, did every preacher of the gospel copy after so laudable an example. Several references in it are made to his Diary, which would have been suppressed as superfluous, were there not cause to think, that the Rev. Mr MICHAEL BOSTON, his grandson, will soon favour the world with his Diary and Memoirs; in which case the particulars referred to may be consulted with pleasure.

As to the SERMONS, they were all preached at a period of the author's life, when the purity of gospel-doctrine was much contended for, on occasion of the Marrow controversy; and the greatest part of them treat of what may be called moral duties. This may partly account for his insisting so largely upon the doctrines of morality at that time, as the doctrine he contended for was then falsely called Antinomianism. By which we may see, that a resolute cleaving to the pure truths of the gospel, natively leads to a conscientious regard to the authority of the divine law. Of which there is the fullest proof in the foregoing Discourses, wherein moral duties are most beautifully illustrated, and warmly urged on the conscience from motives drawn from gospel-principles. *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law*, Rom. iii. 31.

It shall only be further added, that if this collection shall meet with a favourable reception from the public, according to its merit, a volume or two more of this author's Sermons, of the same size, may be published afterwards, as the last remains of his intended for public view.

EDINBURGH, *May* 17.

1773.